

# **Proposed New Zoning for Squamish Business Park**

A report by

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for

Solterra Development Corp.

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## ***Recommendations***

### **Recommended Zoning and Official Community Plan Amendments to Accommodate Business Industrial Uses and a Small Commercial Service Centre in Squamish Business Park**

The following actions are proposed for implementing the objectives and land use policies of the Business Park Sub-area Plan for the mostly undeveloped north portion of the Squamish Business Park:

1. Approve in principle a new I-8 Specialized Business Park Industrial Zoning to replace the I-1 Light Industrial Zoning in the north Squamish Business Park area (north of Commercial Way), a new zoning which retains many of the land uses permitted in I-1, adds some commercial uses, and requires all uses to be wholly undertaken in completely enclosed premises.
2. Approve in principle a new I-9 Specialized Business Park Industrial-Commercial Zoning to replace the I-1 Light Industrial Zoning in the proposed 5-acre commercial business center in the Sea-to-Sky Business Park (at the north-west corner of the Commercial & Discovery traffic circle), a zoning which retains the land uses and conditions of use in the proposed new I-8 Specialized Business Park Industrial Zoning and adds business-serving commercial land uses.
3. Amend the Official Community Plan in two sections of the Policies (Part 4) of the OCP, Commercial Lands (Section 19) and Employment and Industrial Lands (Section 20), to accommodate commercial uses in the Phase 2 lands north of Commercial Way and for accommodating additional uses in a small commercial service centre within that area to serve the entire Squamish Business Park.
4. To expedite development in the north portion (Phase 2 lands) of the Squamish Business Park, undertake the following zoning amendment as a temporary measure:
  - retain the I-1 zoning for all the Squamish Business Park; and
  - add the new uses proposed in a new I-8 zoning to the I-1 zoning schedule with the proviso that they be limited to the properties north of Commercial Way.
5. To expedite development of the proposed 5-acre commercial centre at the Commercial and Discovery traffic circle, undertake as a temporary measure the following amendment to the I-1 zoning:
  - add the commercial uses proposed for a new I-9 Specialized Business Park Industrial-Commercial Zoning, but limiting them to the proposed commercial centre with a proviso that they be limited to the commercial centre.

# **Proposed New Zoning for Squamish Business Park**

## **Introduction and Purpose**

The most recent District of Squamish Official Community Plan, adopted June 15, 2010, contains a Sub Area Plan for the 231-acre Business Park north of Downtown and west of Highway 99. The Business Park Sub Area Plan, initially approved in March 2002, anticipates new business zoning to replace in the Phase 2 portion of the park the I-1 Light Industrial zoning which was initially adopted for all the business park.

A development proposal by Solterra Development Corp. to provide in its 20-acre Squamish Sea-to-Sky Business Park a small cluster of small-scale commercial service uses and amenities requires a zoning amendment to accommodate some of the commercial land uses proposed and this presents an opportunity to review and consider new zoning for the Phase 2 lands.

The purpose of this report is to review the Squamish OCP, the Business Park Sub-Area Plan and the Squamish Zoning-By-law to determine how the Solterra proposal might be accommodated. The consultant is assisted in this review by his recently completed report, "Commercial Services and Amenities in Industrial and Business Parks", which reviewed the advice of industrial and business park development professionals and also the OCPs and zoning bylaws of the 15 Metro Vancouver municipalities with industrial areas and industrial and business parks. In brief, the evidence of this review was that industrial areas and business parks which do not have proximity or good access to commercial services and amenities to serve the needs of industrial businesses and their employees should provide a small service commercial centre to ensure that these needs are met if industrial areas and business parks are to successfully attract businesses and jobs.

This review has also been assisted by a reading of the working draft of the Employment Lands Study which was released on June 23, 2014 for preliminary review.

Analysis of the District of Squamish OCP, Business Park Plan and Zoning was undertaken to identify the various amendments which might be required or recommended in any of these by-laws to accommodate business uses in the Phase 2 lands and also a small centre of commercial services and amenities in Solterra's Squamish Sea-to-Sky Business Park to serve the needs of businesses and employees in the surrounding, larger Squamish Business Park.

## **Background and Context**

A Development Opportunity Study was undertaken for the District in 1999 which completed market, financial and land valuation analyses for an 80-acre industrial park in the District of Squamish. In May 2002, the District adopted the Business Park Sub-Area Plan for the 231-acre Squamish Business Park, much of it owned by the District. As described in the Official Community Plan, "the District of Squamish adopted the Business Park Sub-Area Plan, to identify lands in the Squamish Business Park for business industrial uses, which include knowledge based industries, thereby diversifying industrial uses." (Section 20, page 83)

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A Growth Management Study in 2005 identified employment sectors that would result in a more diversified economy for the District, including the knowledge-based sector, tourism and hospitality industry, and “clean” industry. These sectors make more intensive use of employment lands. The Growth Management Study found the supply of vacant and underutilized industrially designated land sufficient to accommodate industrial demand for the foreseeable future.

The Official Community Plan adopted in 2010 confirmed the previously-approved Squamish Business Park Plan: ““Development in the Squamish Business Park shall occur in accordance with the Business Park Sub-Area Plan as described in Schedule L.” (Policy 20 – 3, page 84)

The Business Park was designated “Employment & Industrial” by the OCP (see map in Schedule B). This is one of several land use designations identified and described in Section 12 of the OCP:

“Employment & Industrial” (which) “Applies to business park uses and to general, light, service, marine and heavy industrial use areas. Examples of uses within the *Employment and Industrial* designation include home-improvement warehouse stores, storage facilities, the Squamish Terminals and other light industrial, specialized commercial and office uses as outlined in “Schedule K Business Park Sub-Area Plan”. (Section 12, page 41)

The Business Park was zoned I-1 Light Industrial with the provision that the undeveloped northern portion be given a business park zoning at a later date and that highway commercial zoning be established for the area adjacent highway 99.

## Proposed Development

In June 2012, Solterra Development Corp. purchased 20 acres from the District in the Squamish Business Park for the development of Squamish-Sea-to-Sky Business Park, the area bounded by Commercial Way, Queens Way, Discovery Way and Pioneer Street. In May 2013, Solterra completed a master plan and in the fall began preparatory work on the first phase, four buildings providing just over 100,000 sf of floor area, located at the corner of Queens and Commercial – across from Toyota. The first building, with 30,000 sf, contains 19 units (about 1,450 sf each) fronting Commercial Way. Solterra is now preparing for a second phase of development at the south-east corner of the site, near the traffic circle at the intersection of Discovery Way and Commercial Way.



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Solterra proposes to develop on 5 acres in the south-east portion of its 20-acre Squamish Sea-to-Sky Business Park, fronting Discovery Way and Commercial Way, north-west of the traffic circle, a cluster of 9 buildings with footprints ranging from 950 sf to 17,902 sf (see site plan in Appendix A). One building would have two storeys. The total floor area proposed is about 75,750 sf (floor space ratio 0.34). The site plan and proposed development, from the number and size of buildings to their siting and number of storeys, is preliminary and illustrative at this point. It is intended to be flexible, with future adjustments to accommodate the needs and requirements of future tenants and purchasers.

It is contemplated that a range of small-scale commercial service uses and amenities would be accommodated in this cluster of buildings to serve the needs of businesses and their employees throughout the Squamish Business Park. Adjacent the traffic circle this site has a central location which will be easily accessible, in walking distance for most employees and businesses in the park. The site also has good transit and bicycle accessibility. It is expected that a small commercial business centre such as this will increase the marketability and success of the park and hasten the development of the remaining empty sites in Squamish Business Park.

On March 25, 2014, Solterra presented its plans to City Council which agreed in principle that the District needs to expedite the development of the business park and ensure the needs of prospective tenants are met so as to take advantage of the District's Revitalization Tax Exemption Program.



### Applicable Plans and Policies

- District of Squamish Official Community Plan, Bylaw No. 2100, adopted June 15, 2010.
- "BUSINESS PARK SUB AREA PLAN DISTRICT OF SQUAMISH", Schedule K to the OCP.
- District of Squamish Zoning Bylaw, No. 2200, 2011 Updated: September 2013.
- Squamish Revitalization Tax Exemption Program 2013-2016 (Version 3.2, 16 December 2013).
- Employment Lands Study, Working Draft (June 23, 2014) – An employment Lands Strategy is anticipated for ensuring a suitable and accessible supply of employment land is maintained to meet current and potential future demand, existing economic development objectives, and new and emerging economic development opportunities.

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## Part 1 – Review of Existing Plans and Zoning

The purpose of this review of the Squamish Official Community Plan, the Business Park Sub-Area Plan and the Squamish Zoning-By-law is to identify the various amendments which might be required or recommended in any of these documents to accommodate business uses in the Phase 2 lands and also a small centre of commercial services and amenities in Solterra’s Squamish Sea-to-Sky Business Park to serve the needs of the surrounding, larger Squamish Business Park.

### 1. Official Community Plan

In its early pages, the OCP has a vision statement for the community and a description of the desired future for Squamish in the year 2031: *“We are a spectacular seaside mountain community where people come to live, learn, work and play in harmony. We are multicultural, compassionate, vibrant and diverse. We are leaders in fostering social integrity, economic development, and environmental sustainability.”*

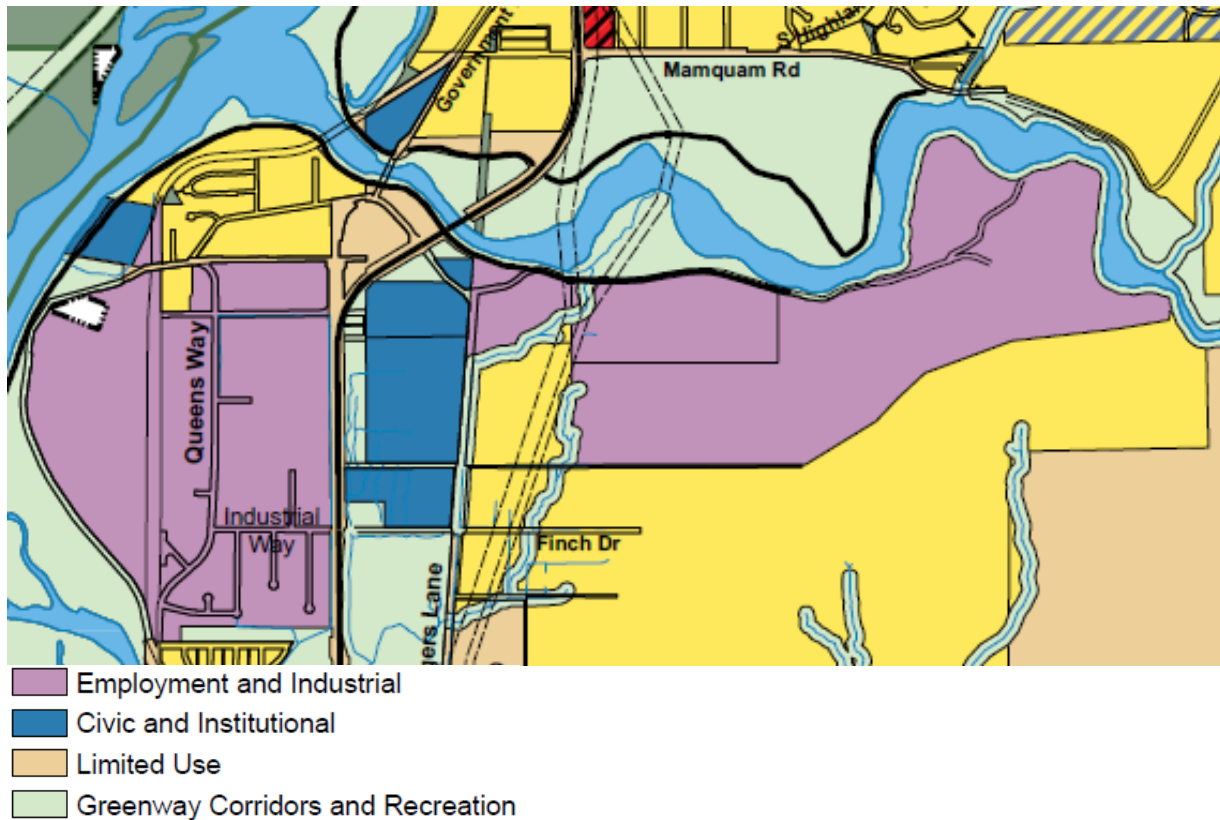
A short while later ten Guiding Principles are set out to provide the framework for the OCP objectives and policies. Principle 3, Local Economic Resilience, is highly relevant to the subject and purpose of this report: *“Economic development supports prosperity for the entire community through the provision of employment lands, by supporting diversification of employment through business development and by providing educational opportunities to residents.”* (page 23).

These 10 principles are combined with ‘Smart Growth’ principles which were adopted by Council in June, 2003 to define 11 growth management objectives for the Official Community Plan. The first 4 are very relevant for the subject at hand regarding Squamish Business Park:

- 1. Make efficient use of the limited land base;*
- 2. Create a complete community with unique, vibrant and mixed-use neighbourhoods;*
- 3. Encourage economic development and the creation of local employment opportunities;*
- 4. Ensure adequate inventories of suitable land and resources for future settlement and employment;*

As we move deeper into the OCP, chapter 12 (Land Use Designations) establishes a designation for “Employment & Industrial” which “Applies to business park uses and to general, light, service, marine and heavy industrial use areas. Examples of uses within the *Employment and Industrial* designation include home-improvement warehouse stores, storage facilities, the Squamish Terminals and other light industrial, specialized commercial and office uses as outlined in “Schedule K Business Park Sub-Area Plan”.”

Schedule B of the OCP establishes the Land Use Designation Map for the District of Squamish. It shows the Squamish Business Park, the rail lands to the west and a large area south of the Mamquam Channel, designated for “Employment and Industrial”, as follows:



In Part 4 of the OCP a broad range and large number of policies and objectives are stated for each of the many land use designations. Seven objectives are stated for “Employment & Industrial” lands:

#### OBJECTIVES

1. To support the establishment and retention of a diverse employment base and range of industries and businesses in Squamish;
2. To support value-added industries and employment opportunities;
3. To encourage higher employment densities to make efficient use of the District’s land base for industrial and employment uses;
4. To encourage industrial development that conserves energy, water, materials, and other resources;
5. To improve economic development options at and near the Squamish Municipal Airport;
6. To promote opportunities to capitalize on knowledge-based industry and education as economic drivers; and
7. To create a strong and sustainable tourism economy within a strong economic mix.

Three significant and preferred characteristics of the employment and industrial lands are established by these objectives:

- employment diversity and density,
- energy, water, materials and resource conservation, and
- value-added and knowledge-based industry, including a role for tourism.

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Following these objectives, 30 policies are stated for Employment & Industrial Lands. The nine listed below seem most relevant for the matter at hand:

**20 - 1** The areas designated as *Employment and Industrial* on Schedule B are to be used for light, service or heavy industrial uses, business park uses, trade schools and institutional uses involving industrial applications based on zoning and Sub-Area Plan requirements.

**20 - 3** Development in the Squamish Business Park shall occur in accordance with the Business Park Sub-Area Plan as described in Schedule L (should be Schedule K).

**20 - 4** The District supports the Downtown as the centre for retail, service, institutional, and office employment in the District.

**20 - 7** Expansion of retail and professional office uses outside of those lands identified in the Business Park Sub-Area Plan are more appropriately located in the downtown, and are not permitted in areas designated for industrial use in order to preserve the industrial land base and promote downtown development.

**20 - 12** Infill and redevelopment of underutilized industrial lands will be a priority for the District in order to promote diverse industry and to mitigate against dispersed industrial development.

**20 - 13** The Business Park and former BC Rail Park will be considered the preferred expansion location of future industrial uses.

**20 - 27** Diversity in the industrial sector is acknowledged as necessary in achieving job security for the local workforce and in achieving overall economic stability and resiliency. As such, the District supports efforts to attract new business to the community.

**20 - 28** The District shall encourage intensification of use in existing industrial areas by supporting the provision of multi-level industrial bays and site coverage where these initiatives are compatible with adjacent non-industrial land uses.

**20 - 30** The District will encourage and promote knowledge-based industries to locate in the community.

Policy 3 is most important, and for this reason the Business Park Sub-Area Plan will be reviewed more closely below. Following this, Policy 7 is very important. By reference to the Business Park Sub-Area it limits retail and professional office uses to specific areas in the Squamish Business Park: retail uses, in particular large format commercial operations such as big box retail outlets, are to be located along the frontage of the Business Park in the area designated Specialized Highway Commercial (32 acres are so designated). Accessory retail uses and large-format building supply outlets are the only retail uses that can be accommodated in the balance of business park area.

Policy 7 also restricts professional office uses to a 53-acre “Industrial Business” area. Office uses are not to be accommodated anywhere else in the balance of Squamish Business Park except as accessory or minor uses. This policy is confirmed in the Business Park Sub-Area Plan: “Ensure that personal service type offices, such as doctors, dentists, lawyers, accountants, travel agencies are not permitted in the

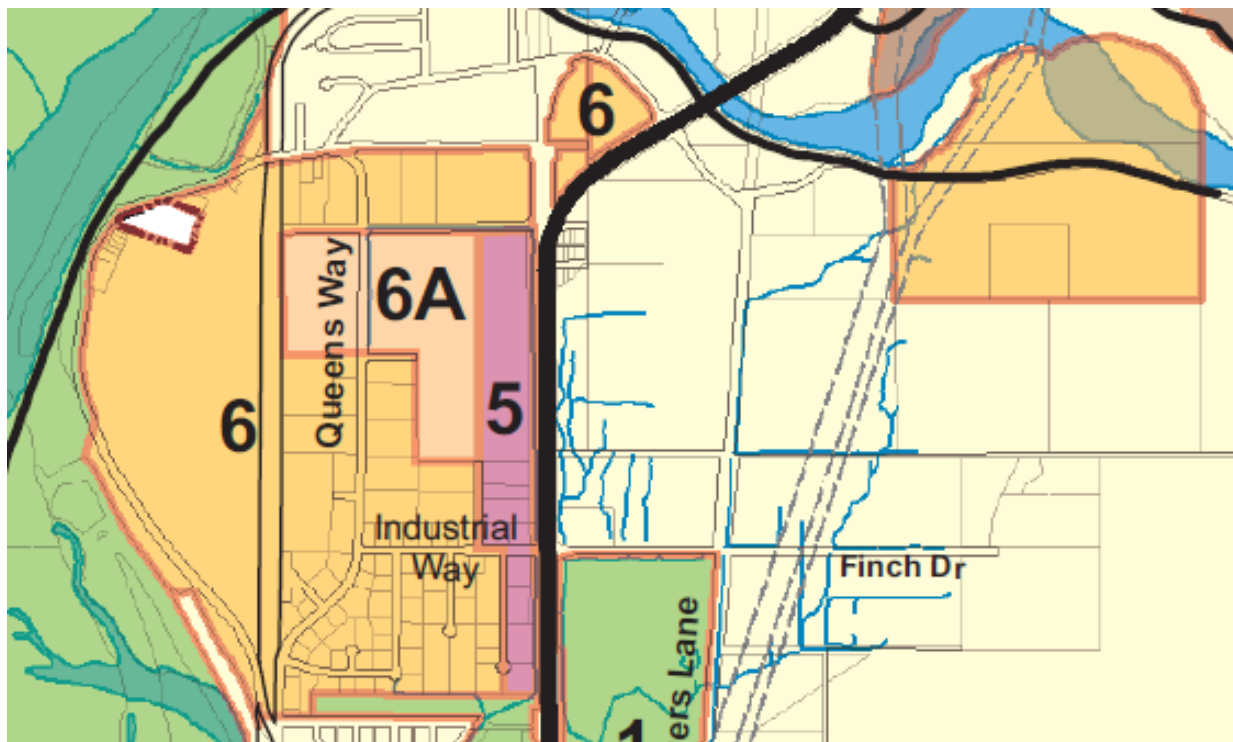
Business Park, as the appropriate location for such offices. Offices not used by the general public on a day to day basis shall be considered appropriate for the Business Park, such as consulting firms, software and high tech firms, and research and development companies” (discussed further below).

The restrictions and limitations on retail and office uses in the Squamish Business Park go hand in glove with a number of policies for the Downtown (Section 18) which, among other things, “encourage the concentration of commercial development in a compact commercial area in the Downtown, particularly along Cleveland and Second Avenues.” Similarly, policies for Commercial Lands (Section 19) seek “to support the Downtown as the priority area for commercial uses in the community.”

It can also be noted that the policies for Commercial Areas (Section 19) provide for commercial uses, though with restrictions as described in the policies for Employment and Industrial lands set out above:

**19 - 1** Lands designated as *Downtown, Highway and Tourist Commercial, Mixed Use Commercial, or Employment and Industrial* on Schedule B allow commercial uses.

Following the policies (Part 4), Part 5 of the OCP establishes twelve “Development Permit Areas in which a development permit must be issued by Council prior to the subdivision of land, the construction or alteration of a structure, or the alteration of land.” Two of these are “DPA 6 Squamish Industrial Park and B.C. Rail Industrial Designation” and “DPA 6a Business Park” as shown below (from Schedule J1):



- 5** Highway 99 Corridor
- 6** Squamish Industrial Park & Industrial
- 6A** Business Park

For a DPA to be established so that development can be given some flexibility in subdivision and development control, “the objectives that justify the designation of Development Permit Areas and the

guidelines that will enable the objectives to be achieved must be established in the Official Community Plan. The creation of Development Permit Areas is intended to give greater control over the form and character of developments in the affected areas beyond the provisions of the Zoning Bylaw and the Subdivision Bylaw. A development permit can also vary the regulations of a bylaw where it can be shown that the public interest will benefit from the resulting modifications. This, however, does not apply to the allowable use or density of the land or any flood proofing requirement.”

Development Permit Area No. 6 (DPA 6) was established to regulate the form and character of industrial development in the Squamish Business Park, the B.C. Rail Industrial area and the east side of the Mamquam Blind Channel according to these two objectives:

1. *To provide guidance for the physical development of the major area to accommodate industrial growth in the District of Squamish with minimal impact on nearby environmentally sensitive areas; and*
2. *To ensure aesthetically attractive industrial development*

Following this, eight development guidelines are set out for achieving these objectives.

The OCP then establishes another development area, DPA 6a, a sub-area within DPA 6 which is entirely within the Squamish Business Park. This sub-area is given additional guidelines (12 in all) which are set out in the Business Park Sub-Area Plan (Schedule “K” of the OCP) and discussed later below.

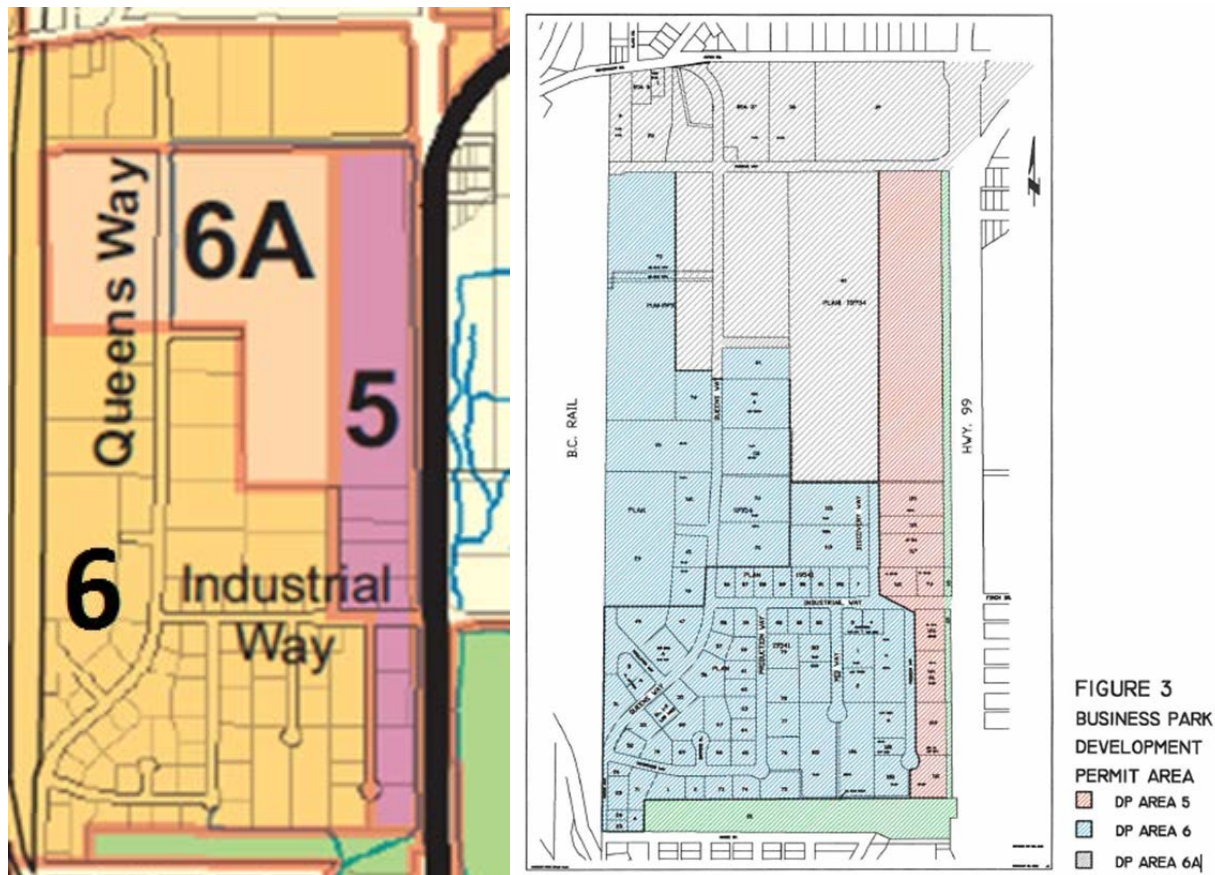
There is potential for confusion between the areas DPA 6, DPA 6a and the Squamish Business Park. The following two pages and diagrams seek to clarify:

- first, there is what is called the “DPA 6 Squamish Industrial Park and B.C. Rail Industrial Designation” as shown in the figure on the preceding page;
- second, there is DPA 6A, also shown above; and
- third there is the area governed by the Business Park Sub-Area Plan, one of several area or sub-area plans (adopted or future) identified in Schedule I of the OCP. This sub-area is equivalent to the Squamish Business Park (see diagram on the next page).

The overlapping of these three appears to represent a form of “overlay zoning”, with the “Business Park Sub-Area” (the 231-acre Squamish Business Park) being within the larger DPA 6 (400 acres), and then containing the smaller “DPA 6a Business Park” (approximately 50 acres) within its boundaries.



The diagram on the left below shows the various DPA areas in the business park. The diagram on the right is Figure 3 in the Business Park Sub-Area Plan, also showing the three DPA areas in the Park.



The side-by-side comparison above shows that the DPA boundaries in the two figures do not coincide exactly. There is an inconsistency between the OCP map of DPAs on the left and the Business Park Sub-Area Plan on the right. The Sub-Area Plan shown in Figure 3 depicts DPA 6a as including the area north of Pioneer Road to Aspen Road. This northern strip, both east and west of Queens Way is not included in the DPA 6a area shown in Schedule J1 of the OCP (excerpt on the left above). In addition, the areas west of Queens Way have different boundaries.

These discrepancies are not critical to the present analysis and can be addressed when OCP amendments are required to implement zoning and related change for the Phase 2 lands in the Squamish Business Park for the long term.

To conclude the review of the relevant OCP provisions, having in mind the 15 municipal OCPs in Metro Vancouver investigated by this consultant, it can be observed that the Squamish OCP land use designations for Downtown, Employment & Industrial, Restricted Industrial, Mixed-Use Commercial and Highway & Tourist Commercial, and the policies adopted for them, read as up-to-date language and thinking about growth management and economic development on the one hand and the counterpart infrastructure and transportation planning on the other.

To recall from earlier discussion, areas designated as *Employment and Industrial* are to be used for “general, light, service marine or heavy industrial uses, business park uses, trade schools and institutional uses involving industrial applications and also home-improvement warehouse stores, storage facilities, and specialized commercial and office uses.”

This land use designation actually combines what are two separate categories in most Metro Vancouver OCPs and also in the Metro Vancouver Regional Growth Strategy: “Mixed Employment” and “Industrial”. Combining the two provides for flexibility, but it effectively delays the day when “industrial” areas are distinguished from “employment” areas which would have a broader and greater mix of uses than would “industrial” areas. This might be beneficial for a small and growing community like Squamish where it could be desirable to keep options open. However, now that development of the northern portion of the Squamish Business Park is imminent, the time to more clearly differentiate between the industrial, business park and employment components might have arrived. Nevertheless, more important and significant than finer distinctions in land use designations will be the differentiations in land use and conditions of use which can be achieved in zoning regulations, and as anticipated in the Business Park Sub-Area Plan, discussed in more detail below.

## 2. Business Park Sub-Area Plan

The stated purpose of the Business Park Sub-Area plan is to guide:

- a) the disposition of District owned lands within the Park to third parties; and
- b) the future development of the Business Park in a manner that balances economic, social, environmental, and other community values.

The Plan sets out a Planning Context comprised of business park attributes and development constraints (discussed later below). This is followed by a vision statement, planning principles and policies regarding

zoning, land use, transportation and infrastructure, and environmental management. DPA 6a guidelines follow, and then a list of five implementation measures.

The Business Park Sub-Area is envisioned to accommodate a mix of commercial and industrial businesses which are intended “to facilitate the development of a progressive and prosperous business environment that will be the catalyst for the continuation and creation of a wide variety of thriving businesses.”

Six of the 12 planning principles (section 3.2), seem especially important to the matter at hand:

- Provide for a land use pattern that accommodates a mix of commercial and industrial land uses.
- Provide for distinct character areas within the Business Park whereby like businesses are situated together to minimize conflicts between non-compatible operations.
- Respect the role of Downtown Squamish and the other commercial areas within the District when determining the types of commercial uses appropriate for the Business Park.
- Ensure that new light industrial and commercial development meet site planning, building, and landscape design criteria in order to achieve a positive image for the Park through the use of Development Permits.
- Provide for pedestrian connectivity through the Park by linking the businesses within the Park to the residential areas both to the south and north of the Park.
- Provide for a small amount of public open space within the Business Park to serve the needs of the people who work there.

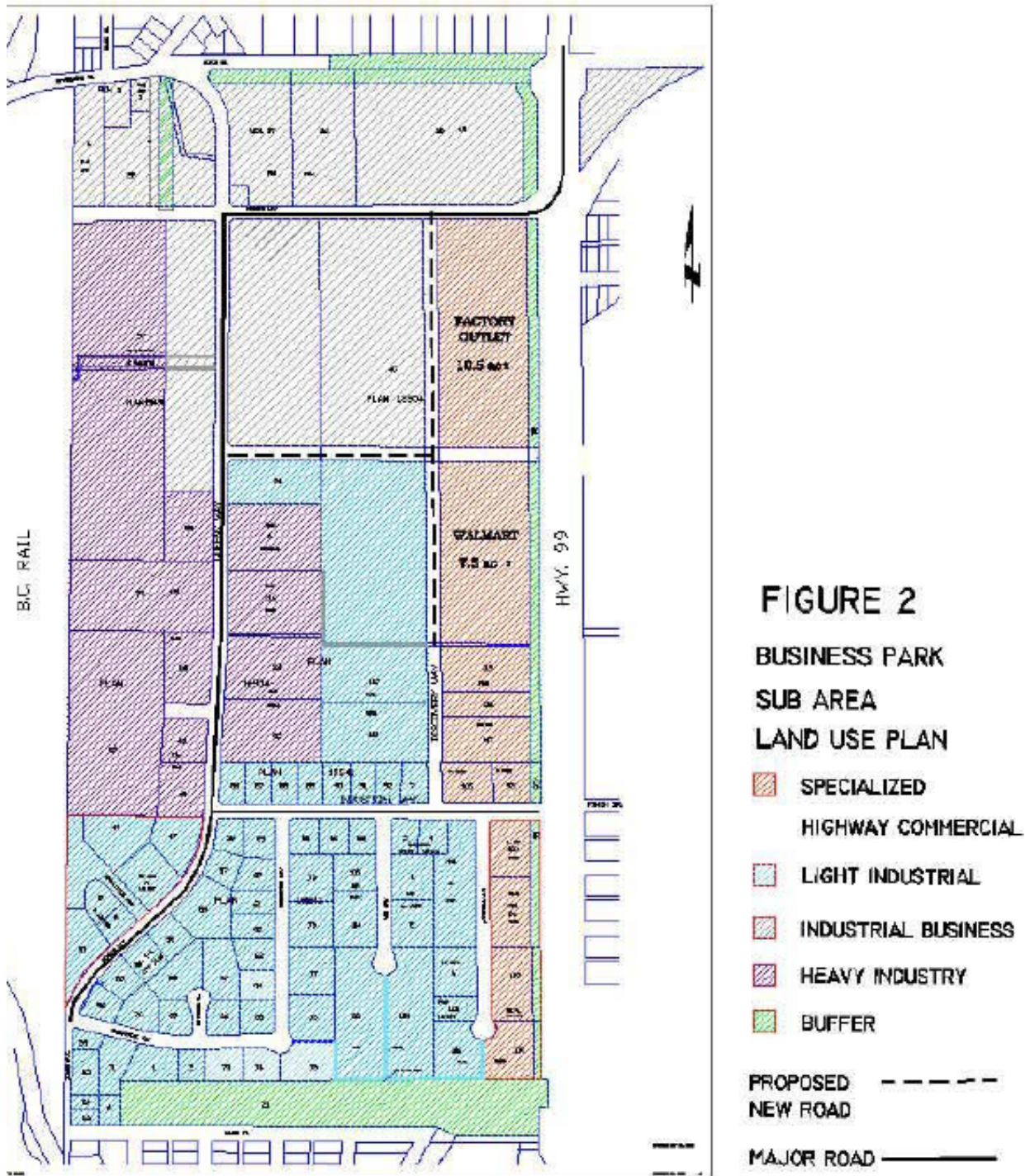
A Policy Framework is set forth in Section 4 which presents four sets of policies (Zoning, Land Use, Transportation and Infrastructure, and Environmental Management) “intended for use by the District as a tool to manage growth of the Business Park in accordance with the Vision Statement and Planning Principles,” particularly the northern undeveloped portion, the area north of Commercial Way.

The first policy, regarding Zoning, is brief, describing a “generalized zoning approach” which proposes the following for the sub-area lands:

“The existing I-1 (Light Industrial) zone that applies to the undeveloped Phase 2 lands designated Specialized Highway Commercial and Industrial Business shall be replaced with new zones that are more reflective of the principles and policies that are articulated in this Plan. This matter will be further outlined in the Implementation Section of this Plan. See Section 6.2 for further details.”

The new commercial zone proposed for the highway frontage has already been established (C-9 Specialized Highway Commercial District). A new industrial zone proposed for the light industrial area in the Phase 2 lands is still required.

Second, a Land Use policy establishes a “general land use pattern” or “land use plan” shown on Figure 2 (see next page) which identifies “Industrial Business” as the general land use recommended for the area that corresponds very closely to development permit area (DPA) 6a.



The following table in the Plan shows the Industrial Business or DPA 6a area in the context of the larger 231-acre Squamish Business Park. The more conventional light and heavy industrial areas are seen to occupy 81 acres and 46 acres respectively, or a total of 127 acres (55 % of the total). The Industrial Business area (53 acres) occupies about a quarter of the total (23%).

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Table 1: Land Use Designations within Business Park Land Use Type

Land Use Type	Acreage	% of Area
Specialized Highway Commercial	32	14
Light Industrial	81	35
Industrial Business	53	23
Heavy Industrial	46	20
Buffer Area	19	8
TOTAL	231	100

The land use plan is followed by various policies applying to each of the land use categories. The following five policies apply to “Industrial Business Land Use” (Section 4.2.2). They provide the substantive and definitive guidance regarding the permitted land uses, and their conditions of use, which would be stated in new zoning for the Industrial Business area. The underlining below highlights the elements of greater significance at the present time:

- a) Accommodate a higher quality form of light industrial development within Phase 2 lands than is permitted in the Phase 1 lands by creating a new zone for light industrial business operations for the Phase 2 lands that would prohibit exterior storage or production.
- b) Accommodate retail uses as a component of a light industrial operation in cases where the retail use occupies no more than 20% of the gross floor area of the overall premises and sells goods produced or stored on the site.
- c) Ensure that personal service type offices, such as doctors, dentists, lawyers, accountants, travel agencies are not permitted in the Business Park, as the Downtown and other commercial centers in the District are deemed to be a more appropriate location for such offices. Offices that are not used by the general public on a day to day basis shall be considered appropriate for the Business Park, such as consulting firms, software and high tech firms, and research and development companies.
- d) Accommodate public institutional uses and indoor recreational uses that require warehouse type space such as for climbing walls within the Industrial Business designation area.
- e) Include all land in the undeveloped portion of the Phase 2 Industrial Business designation within Development Permit Area 6A. See Section 5 of the Sub Area Plan. Note: Something to bear in mind is that it is noted in the Plan that “the lines on the Land Use Plan that differentiate land use categories and identify future roads, are not to be interpreted as rigid, but rather are intended to illustrate intent and principle.”

The foregoing policies for “Industrial Business” very clearly distinguish this land use from “Light Industrial” and “Heavy Industrial” land uses. There is some overlap between Industrial Business and Light Industrial but a key distinction is that light industrial businesses are allowed to have “exterior storage or production” while Industrial Business would be conducted wholly within completely enclosed premises, a requirement which is obviously essential for achieving “higher quality” light industrial development. These distinctions and conditions should be important for identifying the land uses to be permitted in a new Industrial Business zoning district and conditions of use which might be appropriate.

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There is also some overlap between Commercial land uses and Industrial Business, but a key distinction in the Commercial Land Use Policies excludes certain commercial uses from the Business Park:

d) Ensure that regional or neighbourhood level shopping centers/malls with multiple tenancies, and personal service establishments are not included as permitted uses in the Business Park. Retail outlets such as food stores, specialty goods, and liquor stores are more appropriately located within the Downtown or other commercial centres in the District and will not be accommodated within the Business Park.

One further consideration to acknowledge for “Industrial Business” is the expectation regarding landscaped outdoor space in the Buffer and Open Space policies (4.2.5):

- e) Reserve 0.25 – 0.5 acres of land within Phase 2 for a small park to serve the needs of the people working within the Business Park.
- f) Encourage developers of individual parcels to provide outdoor spaces within landscaped areas for use by employees and customers where applicable.

In this respect, Solterra proposes in its commercial centre an outdoor gathering place and seating area in a small plaza near the traffic circle at Commercial and Discovery. It is proposed to include a ‘water tower’ feature which makes reference to the role of the railroad in Squamish history.

The land use plan and policies in the Business Park Plan are followed by Transportation and Infrastructure (4.3) policies and Environmental Management (4.4) policies. As important as these are, they are briefly addressed and by and large have little direct bearing on land uses per se, and so need not be reviewed here, with two exceptions. In any discussion of commercial land uses and amenities to serve the needs of businesses and their employees, location and accessibility will be important considerations. In this regard, two transportation policies provide this important advice:

- g) Accommodate safe bicycle movements on the main roads within the Business Park by providing for a bike lane where possible as per the Commuter Bicycle Network Plan.
- h) Accommodate safe pedestrian movements on the main roads within the Business Park by providing a sidewalk on at least one side of each road.

Prior to concluding with a list of Implementation Measures, the Business Park Sub-Area Plan presents the guidelines for Development Permit Area 6A, established to regulate the form and character of development within the undeveloped portion of Phase 2 of the Business Park. Guidelines for the larger DPA 6 are in Part 5 of the OCP.

The guidelines for the DPA 6a area, for Industrial Business, set a higher standard than those for the surrounding DPA 6 Light and Heavy Industry areas, as follows:

- no outdoor storage or production
- buildings should be located in the front portion of a site
- on-site parking should be landscaped to provide screening
- front and side yards should be landscape and street trees be planted
- retention of mature vegetation or replanting
- hard-surfaced pedestrian walkways.

### 3. Implementing the Plan

Squamish Business Park is a going concern with nearly half its land area developed. However the Business Park Sub-Area Plan prepared and adopted over twelve years ago is not yet fully implemented.

A very important implementation measure in the Business Park Plan are the zoning amendments to replace “the existing I-1 (Light Industrial) zone that applies to the undeveloped Phase 2 lands designated Specialized Highway Commercial and Industrial Business” ... “with new zones that are more reflective of the principles and policies that are articulated in this Plan.” Given that the new C-9 Specialized Highway Commercial zone has been achieved, it remains only to implement a new business park industrial-commercial zoning to replace I-1 in the north half of the Squamish Business Park, particularly in DPA 6a.

The other three implementation measures can be noted briefly. One is to review a proposed subdivision layout for conformity with the principles and policies outlined in the Plan. Another is to prepare a strategy “to outline the optimal approach for the marketing of the District’s lands.” The last calls for a Business Plan review, and updating as necessary, “every 5 to 10 years, or earlier if the need arises.”

The state of Business Park sales and development and unfinished Business Plan implementation raise questions about what actions, if any, might be needed. With Solterra Development Corp. beginning to develop its 20-acre Sea-to-Sky Business Park and now that it proposes to develop a small cluster of commercial service uses to serve the needs of industrial businesses and their employees throughout Squamish Business Park, it is timely to ask those questions now.

To ensure we are asking the right questions about what new zoning would be appropriate, it was decided to first review the current state of development attributes and development constraints (sections 2.2 and 2.3) affecting business park planning and development. A comprehensive analysis to update these elements of the Plan is beyond the parameters of this particular review at hand, but a general review can identify whether or not any of the constraints or attributes have changed significantly in the dozen years since inception of the Plan.

#### 3.1 “Development Constraints”

The Business Park Plan described six development constraints which could affect business park development:

- Restricted Highway Access
- Floodplain
- Infrastructure Upgrading
- Market Conditions
- Existing Businesses Within the Park and Land Uses Adjacent to the Park
- Environmental Features

To our knowledge, none of these has changed significantly over the years, but “market conditions” will be one very important variable and also the one which might be most difficult to address by the District. For this reason, a few observations will be offered about it.

Prior to preparation and adoption of the Business Park Sub-Area Plan in 2002, a Development Opportunity Study completed in 1999 had concluded that “the long term prospects for industrial development in the Business Park are very promising, but that in the short term the demand is expected to be modest”. The Study however noted that “demand could be strong for such commercial uses as goods and services to automobiles, and home improvement and furnishing.”

A couple of years later, the Business Park Sub-Area Plan anticipated that “Since there is a considerable amount of land designated for light industrial use, and given projected absorption rates, the development of these lands will take place over an extended period of time. ... The Business Park will continue to develop in an incremental and gradual manner over the years in accordance with the demand for commercial and industrial land that will be generated by market forces.”

A brief review of the industrial land supply in the District of Squamish could be helpful at this point. The table below shows that there are 1,678 acres of land zoned for industry in the District. Interestingly, this industrial land supply is very similar to the inventory in Vancouver which has 1,577 acres. Interestingly too, both occupy a similar land area, 44 square miles in Vancouver and 40.5 in Squamish.

Squamish Industrial, Commercial and Mixed-Use Lands, 2012

	<b>Industrial Land</b>	<b>Commercial Land</b>	<b>Mixed Use</b>
<b>Total</b>	1,678.41 ac	376.20 ac	34.29 ac
<b>Acres Developed</b>	1,056.54 ac	279.60 ac	32.80 ac
<b>Acres Vacant</b>	622.11 ac	96.60 ac	1.48c

Source: Squamish-Lillooet Regional District community profile

Note: The Employment Lands Study which is now underway has more up to date figures but the magnitudes are not too different.

Aside from similar total land area and industrial land supply, Vancouver and Squamish have few similarities. In particular, while Vancouver has virtually little vacant industrial land (67 acres or 4.2 %), Squamish has an ample supply, as shown in the above table, with 622 acres being vacant (37 %).

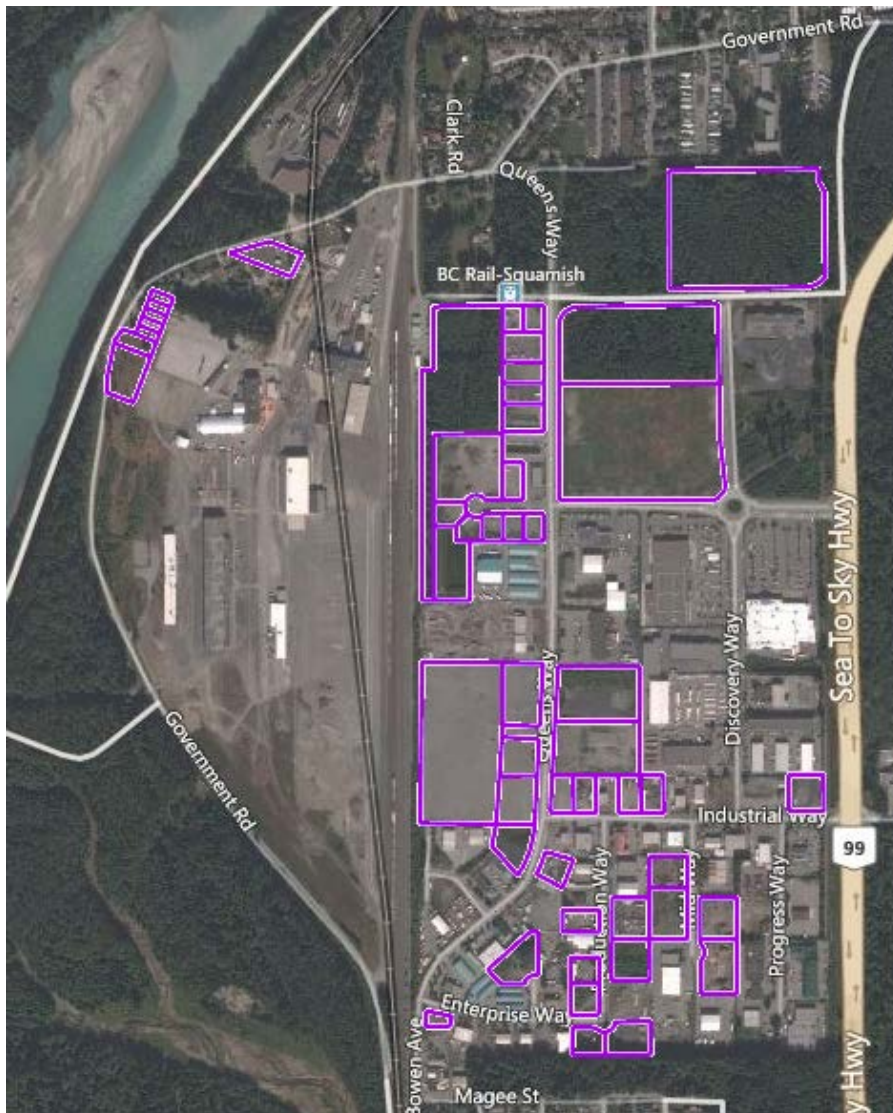
In the Metro Vancouver area, there are about 28,000 acres of industrially zoned land in 2010, with 6,300 vacant (23%). The percentage of vacant land varies considerably from one municipality to another, with the largest supply in the more suburban, semi-rural municipalities and districts. Similar to Squamish, the District of Surrey has 36.2 % of its industrial land being vacant (2,293 acres out of a 6,334 total).

The biggest difference between Vancouver and Squamish are their population and employment numbers. Vancouver has 603,500 residents and 393,000 jobs, Squamish has 17,764 residents (in 2011) and an estimated 4,450 jobs (if jobs grew at the same rate as population did, 14.7% since 2006). (Note: The Employment and Lands Study incorporates labour force data from the 2011 Census but employment data, i.e. jobs in Squamish, are not available.)

Two ratios make for informative comparisons. A ratio of the amount of industrial land per 1,000 population is 13.2 acres for the Metro Vancouver region, while it is 97.8 for Squamish, indicating a very large industrial land supply relative to population in the District. The second ratio is the amount of industrial land per 1,000 employment or jobs and which is 17 acres for the Metro Vancouver region, while it is an enormous 377 for Squamish, indicating a considerable industrial land supply relative to the local economy.

If nothing else, these numbers indicate that Squamish is very unlikely to run out of industrial land anytime soon. On the other hand, the data might indicate some challenges. While the number of jobs in Squamish is estimated at 4,450 in 2011, the labour force is more than double at 10,270 workers. This means 5,820 people are working outside the district, perhaps many of them making the 50-km commute to the Vancouver area.

In this broad context, the Squamish Business Park appears to be slow to develop since its inception early last decade. The District of Squamish website confirms this in a map shown below which portrays the many properties which are vacant in the Business Park. These appear to represent about 50-60 percent of the total land area of the park (115 – 140 acres of 231 acres), which is significantly more than the district-wide 37% vacant industrial land.



The more recent Employment Lands Study confirms this observation, with data showing 108 of 189 acres being vacant and undeveloped (57%) and 81 developed (43%). (Note: 1 hectare = 2.47 acres):

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	Hectares of Vacant or Underdeveloped Parcels <sup>a</sup>	Hectares of Developed Parcels	Total Hectares
<b>Industrial Business Park</b>	<b>43.76</b>	<b>32.82</b>	<b>76.58</b>
COMMERCIAL	3.95	4.40	8.35
INDUSTRIAL	3.83	2.46	6.28
INDUSTRIAL - LIGHT	34.01	25.96	59.97
INDUSTRIAL - RESOURCE	1.98	0.00	1.98

Source: Employment Lands Study, page 23.

Policies 20-12, 20-27 and 20-28 in the OCP speak to the matter of employment diversity and intensity, as expressed in Objectives 1 and 3 for industrial lands -- to support the establishment of a diverse employment base and to encourage higher employment densities.

And so an important topic here is not only the slow rate of development but also the slow intensification of the use of industrial lands. Under-utilized industrial lands are characterized by considerable outdoor storage, outdoor parking, loading and truck movement areas, as well as abandoned railway spurs, sheds, or other low-value improvements. Underutilization includes everything from underused and empty areas to obsolete, inefficient, and inconvenient buildings.

Another aspect of underutilization is land use. Different industrial businesses utilize land and buildings in different ways. From rail- and port-related industry to manufacturing, printing, and brewing, to wholesaling and warehousing, all have differing requirements and different business models. Their building requirements and their needs for outdoor activity and storage and their employment densities can differ considerably from one another.

Data on this topic is hard to come by but some people will be acquainted with a rule of thumb in both economic development and transportation planning whereby Office land use has one employee per 250-300 sf (gross) of building floor area, Retail has 1 employee per 500-600 sf and Industrial can range from 1 employee per 1,000 sf (manufacturing) to 1 per 10,000 sf (warehousing).

A recent analysis was found which looked at employment per acre (Edmonton Industrial Lands Study, 2011). We can anticipate that goods-oriented transportation-related warehouse and distribution businesses would have fewer employees on site than service- and knowledge-oriented office activities. These characteristics go a long way to explain an employment density for R&D/Office use which is 3.4 times higher than it is for transportation and warehousing ( $83/26 = 3.4$ ):

**Table 3-2**  
**City of Edmonton**  
**Average Employment Density by Select Sector/Land Use**

District	Average Employment per net Ha	Average Employment per net Acre
Research & Development/Office	83	34
Manufacturing	44	18
Construction	41	16
Wholesale Trade	33	13
Transportation and Warehousing	26	10

Source: Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. based on Edmonton business survey

The nature and magnitude of recent industrial development in Squamish is not well known to this consultant, and less is known about any increased intensity of industrial land use in developed areas. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that in Squamish as elsewhere, the financial fiasco of 2008 and ensuing economic downturn dampened demand such that market absorption has not met earlier expectations. Perhaps, too, any possible benefits from the Vancouver-Whistler 2010 Olympics have now come and gone.

The Development Opportunity Study prepared by G.P. Rollo and Associates Ltd. in 1999 indicated that the short term demand in the Business Park was expected to be modest, but that “demand could be strong for such commercial uses as goods and services to automobiles, and home improvement and furnishing.” These prospects have certainly been borne out in the development of the Rona, The Home Depot and Walmart stores and the Toyota and Ford dealerships in the Business Park immediately south of Commercial Way. It is difficult to point to any light industrial or high-tech businesses and developments of similar scale.

It is well evident that market forces are not equal among land uses, which is one of the reasons why local governments utilize zoning regulations to govern the growth and development of communities and neighbourhoods rather than leaving it to the market. Distinguishing among land uses to be permitted in various districts is thus a very important tool relative to market conditions. This topic will be discussed again below.

### 3.2 Business Park “Attributes”

The Business Park Plan described six development attributes which can contribute to business park development:

- Highway Visibility
- Single Landowner of Large Unsubdivided Site
- Revenue Generator
- Flat Site
- Select Committee on Commercial Development
- BC Rail

A very important attribute of the Business Park for the District of Squamish and its taxpayers is the revenue-generating potential of the Business Park, both the revenue generated by the sales of District-owned lands and then the property tax revenues which can be anticipated.

This is so significant that the Plan states that in view of this revenue potential “it is important that the District be cognizant of the land’s highest and best use in its consideration of planning options (2.2.3 Revenue Generator).” Very obviously ‘highest and best use’ cannot be the sole consideration and must be balanced with other considerations. However, the comment speaks to the relevance of financial and related factors in the decisions of land users.

What is perhaps one of the Business Park’s most attractive new attributes is the property tax incentive offered by the Revitalization Tax Exemption Program adopted by the District of Squamish in 2013. This program of property tax exemptions for new construction or renovations of existing buildings in

specified areas, one of these being the Squamish Business Park, is open for a three year period from November 6, 2013 to August 31, 2016.

The program is intended to encourage investment that will create new commercial, mixed use and industrial space. The program has the following objectives:

- Provide owners with an incentive in the form of a tax exemption for the development of eligible new construction or renovation to an existing building(s).
- Encourage new Commercial or Mixed Use construction or renovation to an existing building in the Downtown.
- Encourage new Industrial construction or renovation to an existing building in the Business Park.
- Strengthen the viability of existing businesses.
- Improve the image and attractiveness of the Priority Areas.
- Increase the foot traffic, activity, and animation of the Priority Areas.

Eligibility requires applicants to be legal owner of a property within a designated area and have been issued a building permit between November 6, 2013 and August 31, 2016. Projects must be new construction or renovation that complies with applicable land use and all other District regulations and, in the Business Park (Area B), must have a building permit construction value of \$500,000 or more.

It is not difficult to infer from this program that land sales and property tax revenues in Squamish Business Park have not met expectations, as municipal councils are otherwise most reluctant to forego tax revenues. And as noted earlier, the slow progress is not likely due to any poor planning or too optimistic expectations but very simply the widespread halt in economic growth in late 2008 and the very, very slow recuperation since then.

And now with 2.5 years remaining in this 3-year program there is perhaps a sense of urgency that this program should kick-start land sales and new construction. What might contribute to the success of the program is the consideration of highest and best uses in new zoning for the north half of the Squamish Business Park, albeit without compromising the broad objectives and policies of the OCP.

Zoning can be a supportive attribute when it removes uncertainty regarding a broad range of land uses permitted in an area. However, except for the area along Highway 99 which has been rezoned C-9 Highway Commercial, most of the Business Park remains zoned I-1 with no differentiation between Heavy Industrial, Light Industrial and Business-Industrial anticipated in the Business Plan.

This is undoubtedly one of the things which account for an observation in the recent Employment Lands Study regarding potential conflict between land uses:

Feedback from project focus groups suggested that industrial users do not perceive the Business Park as suitable, desirable or affordable industrial employment space given existing adjacency issues (i.e., close proximity of commercial retail operations, including auto dealers and large format retailers). Similarly, commercial developers and retailers expressed concern that potential commercial tenants are concerned to develop new ventures at the site lest a potentially conflicting industrial user occupy currently vacant industrially zoned land next to their development.” (pages 26-27)

It is land use conflict and incompatibilities which gave rise to zoning in the first place (*US vs Euclid*, 1922), and while mixed-use zoning has become more and more prevalent in recent times, a fairly strict separation of land uses remains the law of the land in most jurisdictions when dealing with noxious uses which have noise, dust, odour, vibration, visual, traffic and related impacts beyond their property boundaries.

The Business Plan anticipated this in the second of twelve planning principles:

- Provide for distinct character areas within the Business Park whereby like businesses are situated together to minimize conflicts between non-compatible operations.

The Plan implementation which it remains to do, to replace I-1 zoning with new industrial zoning for the Phase 2 lands in the north half of Squamish Business Park, is perhaps exactly the attribute which is needed at the present time to attract businesses and facilitate industrial park development.

As a general observation, in its gradual and circumspect approach to these matters the District of Squamish is not too different from the municipal governments in Metro Vancouver which have been concerned to preserve industrial lands for industrial use. To this end they have sought to resist encroachment by non-industrial uses which would impact industrial activity and affect industrial land values. Big-box retail and offices have presented the greatest concern and some municipalities have addressed their pressures and demand by creating special districts for them.

Municipal governments are also increasingly encouraging employment growth in well-located industrial areas or areas well-served by transit through mixed-use districts which combine light industry with business-oriented office uses and institutional uses which do not attract the general population. Economic development planning is encouraging higher density employment zones with a broader mix of land uses. Growing cities and municipalities want to be careful to match population and employment growth while ensuring that corresponding growth in transportation infrastructure and other services will be efficient. For this reason we see more and more economic development planning which limits population-serving activities and businesses to town centres and carefully situated and sized neighbourhood centres. Just as cities and municipalities increasingly resist residential sprawl and encourage higher population densities surrounding established commercial centres, so too are they resisting business sprawl.

[A footnote regarding business park attributes regarding “highway visibility” (2.2.1): The Business Plan described how “Being located on Highway 99, the frontage of the Business Park has excellent exposure and visibility. Some businesses that require high visibility would find this location very appealing.” No doubt unanticipated at the time, in the 12 years gone by the green buffer which protects the channelized stream on the west side of Highway 99 has sprouted a curtain of trees which effectively blocks all view of adjoining business park development.]



#### 4. Existing Interim Light Industrial I-1 Zoning

Since its inception, Squamish Business Park has been generally zoned Light Industrial (I-1), one of seven industrial zoning district schedules in the District of Squamish zoning by-law.

The zoning map extract to the left below also shows some General Industrial (I-3), Used Goods Industrial (I-4) and Rock Processing (I-7) zoning, with BC Rail lands to the west zoned Rail Marshalling Yards (I-2). There is the Specialized Highway Commercial (C-9) district on the west side of Highway 99, two small CD sites, and two undeveloped RS-2 parcels north of Pioneer Road. There is small Tourist Commercial (C-3) District to the northeast.



The zoning map extract to the right shows the Phase 2 lands in the north part of Squamish Business Park zoned primarily I-1 Light Industrial with some properties between Pioneer Road and Aspen Road north of Road zoned RS-2.

The I-1 zoning allows a range of industrial uses and also some non-industrial uses which are typically accommodated in light industrial districts (automobile oriented commercial, building supply outlets, motor vehicle repair shops, nurseries and trade contractor facilities):

#### SECTION 32 | LIGHT INDUSTRIAL (I-1)

The intent of this zone is to provide for light industrial uses.

##### 32.1 PERMITTED USES

The following principal uses and no others are permitted:

- (a) automobile oriented commercial;
- (b) building supply outlets;
- (c) business and Professional Office, Minor Use subject to Section 4.21 [see discussion below]
- (d) drive-through restaurant, subject to Sections 32.12;
- (e) fitness centre;
- (f) grooming of domestic dogs and cats;
- (g) heavy equipment sales;
- (h) industrial fuel installation;

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- (i) light industrial;
- (j) motor vehicle repair shops;
- (k) nurseries;
- (l) restaurant subject to Section 32.12; and
- (m) trade contractor facilities, including logging contractors.

“Light Industrial”, in (i) above, is defined in the Zoning By-law to mean “a use providing for the processing, fabricating, assembling, leasing, warehousing, transporting, distributing, wholesaling, testing, servicing, or repairing of goods or materials, where the primary activity of such a use is carried out within or exterior to a building, which may be serviced with a railway spur. Includes Medical Marihuana Production Multiple Users.”

The “business and Professional Office, Minor Use” is subject to Section 4.21. This is undoubtedly an error as that provision, in Section 4 General Regulations of the Zoning By-law, pertains to accessory residential use.

On the other hand, and very importantly, there is a provision in the I-1 schedule which limits this use to 60% of the gross floor area of the building on a specific lot:

#### 32.13 BUSINESS OFFICE USE CONDITIONS

- (a) A Business and Professional Office, Minor Use shall only be permitted on the property described as: Strata Lot 1, District Lot 759, Group 1, New Westminster District, Strata Plan LMS 2331 and limited to 60% of the gross floor area of the building.
- (b) Accessory retail sales are not permitted in association with Business and Professional Office, Minor uses.

The I-1 zoning allows outdoor storage and activity but there are screening requirements (32.11):

“Screening and landscaping shall be provided in accordance with Section 4.7 of this Bylaw.”

The I-1 zoning and its regulations can be characterized as very typical for a light industrial district, although some jurisdictions would prohibit exterior production and require screening for any exterior storage. It can also be observed that its limitations on office uses and a restriction on the number of buildings per lot means that the I-1 zoning is a long way from accommodating what would normally be considered a business park developed with multi-tenant, high-quality buildings on attractively landscaped sites.

## 5. New Business Park Zoning Required

The Official Community Plan confirmed the Squamish Business Park for business industrial uses including specialized commercial and office uses as outlined in “Schedule K Business Park Sub-Area Plan. The 231-acre business park was zoned I-1 Light Industrial with the provision that at a later date the undeveloped northern portion (Phase 2 lands) be given “new zones that are more reflective of the principles and policies that are articulated in this Plan. “

The development of Solterra Development Corp's 20-acre Sea-to-Sky Business Park in the Phase 2 lands north of Commercial Way, and Solterra's proposal for a small commercial service centre, present an opportunity to move forward on further implementation of the Squamish Business Park Plan.

In this last section of the first part of this report, and as a summary of the preceding, an action plan emerges from the review on the foregoing pages, comprised of the following tasks:

- identify the areas in Squamish Business Park to be rezoned from I-1 Light Industrial to new Business Park zoning;
- identify the land uses to be permitted in a new Industrial Business zoning district schedule, as well as any special considerations or conditions of use which might be appropriate; and
- consider if any other actions might be necessary, including OCP and Business Plan amendments.

The area to be rezoned from I-1 to a new business park zoning extends north of Commercial Way, although as noted in earlier discussion there is some ambiguity about this. The Land Use policy in the Business Park Sub-Area Plan established a "general land use pattern" or "land use plan" which recommended "Industrial Business" as the preferred land use for the Phase 2 lands, an area which corresponds closely to development permit area (DPA) 6a.

As discussed earlier, this Industrial Business area is stated to be 53 acres in size, occupying just under a quarter of the total 231-acre Squamish Business Park. It was also observed, however, that the boundaries of this Industrial Business area and those of DPA 6a do not coincide exactly. For example, DPA 6a does not include the undeveloped area between Pioneer and Aspen Roads but it includes the area south of Commercial Way and fronting Discovery Way (on the west side of Discovery).

A redrawing of the "Industrial Business" boundaries would necessitate an amendment to the boundaries of the DPA 6a in the OCP and Business Park Sub-Plan. At the present time however, the matter of boundaries is not urgent and could be reviewed at the time of the anticipated OCP review in 2016.

What is important and urgent at the present time, for the development of Sea-to-Sky Business Park and for Solterra's proposed small commercial service centre within that park, is to identify the land uses in the I-1 zone which remain appropriate in the Industrial Business portion of the business park, the new commercial uses to be added, and any conditions of use.

A condition of use will be required regarding a significant development characteristic which is to distinguish the north half or Phase 2 of the business park from the south half below Commercial Way and that is a "higher quality" of light industrial development reflected in both buildings and surrounding site development. The DPA 6a guidelines set out the expectations regarding this, the first being "No outdoor storage or production will be permitted in this portion of the Business Park".

Another action which will be necessary is amendments to the OCP, including Sections 19 (Commercial Lands) and 20 (Employment and Industrial Lands) as well as Schedule K (Business Park Sub-Area Plan), to accommodate a greater range of commercial uses in the proposed commercial service centre than is presently anticipated in the Plan.

## Part Two – New Industrial Business Park Zoning

Twelve years and more have passed since the preparation and adoption of the Business Park Sub-Area Plan but new zoning for the northern less-developed Phase 2 part of the Squamish Business Park has not yet been established. Solterra Development Corp recently purchased 20 acres in the northern portion of Squamish Business Park from the District of Squamish where it proposes to develop Sea-to-Sky Business Park. Interest from light industrial businesses has been limited and the I-1 zoning does not permit the commercial uses (primarily knowledge-based, high-tech offices) anticipated in a high-quality business park, Solterra also proposes to develop a 5-acre commercial service centre to serve the surrounding business park and to attract new businesses to the park.

The following map diagram generally illustrates the new zoning which could be developed: new Business Park Industrial zoning north of Commercial Way and an industrial-commercial zoning for the proposed 5-acre business-serving commercial centre north-west of the traffic circle.



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## 1. Business Park Planning and Zoning

A two-part investigation was undertaken in order to get the context and fundamentals right regarding Solterra's Sea-to-Sky Business Park and its small commercial centre:

- some literature review to seek to identify some 'best practices' regarding commercial land uses in industrial and business parks, and
- a review of the community plans and zoning regulations of Metro Vancouver cities and municipalities to identify their common practice and some examples of providing commercial activities in industrial areas and business parks to serve the needs of their businesses and employees.

The result was a companion report "Commercial Services in Industrial and Business Parks" which found a rationale and some parameters for accommodating a range of small-scale commercial service uses and amenities in a small and centrally-located cluster of buildings to serve the needs of industrial and business park businesses and their employees. The most important findings of that report which are relevant for Squamish Business Park and its success are summarized here.

### 1.1 Current Best Practices in Business Park Planning

The "current best practices" in the planning, development and marketing of industrial and business parks was sought primarily in the advice of the Urban Land Institute. ULI was established in the US in 1936. Today it "has more than 30,000 members worldwide representing the entire spectrum of the land use and development disciplines." ULI relies heavily on the experience of its members. It is through member involvement and information resources that ULI has been able to set standards of excellence in development practice. The Institute has long been recognized as one of the world's most respected and widely quoted sources of objective information on urban planning, growth, and development."

From the ULI development handbooks on industrial and business park development we learn that there is widespread general recognition in the real estate industry and municipal government since the late 1980s that modern industrial and business parks, depending on their size and location, to be successful might need to serve the commercial service and amenity needs of their industrial businesses and employees.

First, the most recent ULI handbook on industrial and business parks defines a business park as "a multibuilding development planned to accommodate a range of uses, from light industrial to office space, in an integrated parklike setting with supporting uses for the people who work there. They can range from small parks on several acres to facilities of several hundred acres or more." Business parks generally offer a mix of warehouses, flex space, and offices to meet the needs of a range of occupiers. In addition to business parks there are many categories and specialized types of industrial parks which have emerged over the past 20 years: Industrial Parks, Warehouse/Distribution Parks, Logistics Parks, Research Parks, Technology Parks, Incubator Parks and Corporate Parks.

ULI advisors see a broad range of commercial activities included among the amenities and services for employees and businesses in a business park depending on the kind of industrial park, its size and the availability or not of amenities and services in close proximity to the park. These activities include

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restaurants, fast-food outlets, convenience stores, banks, travel agencies, dry cleaners, barber shops and beauty salons, daycare facilities, health clubs, recreational facilities, copy centers, mailing and delivery services, office supply stores, automobile service stations, auto repair shops and hotel or motel with meeting facilities.

ULI advises that on-site amenities and services, which are increasingly expected by businesses and employees and which contribute to a more interesting and desirable working environment, are one of the key design elements in the development of industrial and business parks. Amenities and services are also described as one of ten important site selection criteria in the development of business parks and in the site selection process of industrial and related businesses.

The ULI handbook laments strict and restrictive industrial zoning regulations governing permitted land uses in industrial districts: “It is unfortunate that current zoning practices in many communities exclude these uses from the new models for business parks, as these support services supply the growing density and diversity of employees found working in these facilities. It is hoped communities eventually will recognize that integration of these services into the fabric of business parks makes good sense, using land more efficiently and reducing traffic congestion by placing such services within walking distance of their users.”

We cannot expect to find a more rousing endorsement in principle for the Business Park Sub-Area Plan, and the Solterra proposal, than the foregoing remarks. However, the ULI advice is highly principled on this matter, advising that “The creation of a successful industrial development, whether a standalone building or a multiphase business park, demands expertise in assessing market conditions, obtaining financing, creating an appropriate design, marketing, and managing the finished product. It must achieve a balance between the goals of the local community and those of the project's sponsors. Although the process is not always simple, with a clear vision on the part of all parties it is possible to create a product that is an asset to the community and a profitable venture for the developer.” (underlining ours)

## 1.2 Commercial Centres in Metro Vancouver Business Parks

To ensure that general advice intended for a broad North American audience has relevance for the District of Squamish, a second investigation was undertaken, to review the plans and zoning in the fifteen Metro Vancouver cities and municipalities that have significant amounts of industrial land.

Ample evidence was found in these Official Community Plans and Zoning Bylaws that the commercial service and amenity needs of industrial businesses and employees in industrial and business parks must be met on site if these parks do not have proximity and good access to established population-serving commercial centres or districts, town centres or shopping malls located nearby:

- In one group of jurisdictions, which includes Vancouver, Richmond, Delta, New Westminster, Port Moody, Pitt Meadows, Maple Ridge and Langley City, as well as many industrial, business and office parks in Central Burnaby, industrial areas and parks have good to very good proximity to population-serving commercial services and amenities in districts or town centres nearby. Consequently their industrial lands are generally free of non-industrial uses, except for “high-tech” office uses or big-box retail in specific zones in mixed-employment areas.

- In a second group jurisdictions by contrast, which includes North Vancouver District and City, Burnaby, Surrey, Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam and Langley Township, industrial areas and parks are not located near population-serving commercial areas. However, in all these case, industrial areas and industrial or business parks contain a small commercial area to serve industrial businesses and employees in very close proximity to their workplaces.

Prominent and obvious examples in the second group include Marine Way/Boundary Business Centre and Big Bend Crossing in Burnaby's very large Big Bend industrial area, the commercial centres in Surrey's proposed large Campbell Heights Business Park and in its well-established Port Kells industrial area near Golden Ears Bridge, and the commercial node in Langley Township's very large Gloucester Industrial Park. Another 10 smaller industrial areas and business parks with commercial centres were also identified.

It was not difficult to conclude the foregoing investigations with the fundamental conviction that where an industrial or business park is not located in close proximity to an established commercial district or town centre, then it should provide a small service commercial component to serve the needs of the businesses and employees in the industrial or business park.

The principal entrance to Squamish Business Park is located about a mile from Downtown Squamish to the south and a similar distance to Antigonish Mall to the north. Solterra's proposed service commercial centre is proposed adjacent the centrally located traffic circle at Commercial and Discovery. On this basis, both the developer and the municipal officials should be comfortable to accommodate a small commercial centre in the Sea-to-Sky Business Park – the developer comfortable that there can eventually be sufficient market for local-serving commercial businesses and the municipal officials comfortable that an industry- and business-serving commercial centre will not compete with or detract from Downtown commercial services and activities.

### 1.3 Potential Lessons for Squamish Business Park Planning

If the case is made for accommodating business- and employee-serving commercial land uses in a business park, the question then arises how best to do so. The review summarized above drew four significant observations about the 15 cases of small commercial districts serving industrial areas and industrial or business parks in Metro Vancouver which might be helpful for considering and accommodating a small commercial business centre in Squamish Business Park:

- (a) In all cases, commercial centres were provided on commercially-zoned pockets or islands set in a sea of industrially-zoned land. At the outset of this investigation it was thought that comprehensive development (CD) zoning might govern land use and development in most of the more well-known industrial and business parks of Metro Vancouver, including the accommodation of business-serving and employee-serving commercial uses. But that was not the case. Only the Big Bend industrial area in Burnaby utilizes CD zoning and that for industrial and business uses only. In Burnaby as elsewhere, small commercial centres serving industrial areas and industrial/business parks have commercial zoning.
- (b) The fifteen commercial centres identified in Metro Vancouver within or adjoining industrial areas and industrial/ business parks generally allow the land uses typically permitted in local-serving commercial zoning districts, including two which permit hotel use as suggested by ULI. There are

many instances of size limitations, or maximum of number of seats in restaurants. We can note that is already the case that Squamish Business Park is served by two hotels nearby (Sandman Inn and Best Western).

- (c) The amount of commercially-zoned land is generally quite small relative to the surrounding industrially-zoned land. Due to the lack of readily available data, visual inspection suggested a range between of 3 and 7 percent, although one appeared considerably larger. Map analysis was undertaken which confirmed three typical cases and the one atypical case:

Location	Total Industrial and Commercial Area (acres)	Commercial Area (acres) estimated	Percent
Gloucester (Langley Twnp)	700	26	3.7
Dollarton/Front (N.Van)	170	7.4	4.4
Main/Mountain (N. Van)	139	6.5	4.7
Big Bend (Burnaby)	1003	98.6	9.8

The analysis confirmed that commercial centres range in size between 3.7 and 4.7 percent of the total industrial or business park land area. The one exception was one of the Big Bend commercial centres which in fact appears on closer analysis to be a bigbox retail centre serving the nearby residential neighbourhood to the north, similar to the Queensborough Landing Outlet Mall in New Westminster and South Richmond Ironwood Plaza.

This relative proportion of commercial service area to industrial or business park area, say 3 to 5 percent, speaks to the reality that if a business park is not located in close proximity to an established commercial district or town centre, then it needs to provide a small service commercial component of its own to serve the needs of its employees and businesses.

- (d) Five of the 15 jurisdictions studied (Vancouver, Richmond, Surrey, Coquitlam and Langley Township) have Zoning By-laws containing a wide range of commercial and industrial districts, quite similar to that in the District of Squamish District Zoning By-law, with some zoning districts being quite liberal in the range of commercial uses permitted in addition to light industrial. The other ten jurisdictions have zoning district schedules which are conventional (industrial, commercial, residential...) and do not offer much in the way of mixed-use zoning districts.

One of these findings (c) is helpful in addressing the amount of land which might be accommodated in a small commercial centre in Squamish Business Park. While 5 acres represent a significant portion of Solterra’s 20-acre Sea-to-Sky Business Park, it represents only 2.2 % of the 231-acre Squamish Business Park land area, a very small amount which is less than the low end of business park zoning and development in Metro Vancouver. A benefit of going on the low side in this matter is to avoid competition with the Downtown or detract from the Downtown’s role.



## 2. New Zoning to Replace Interim I-1 Zoning

Prior to considering the zoning which would be appropriate to replace the I-1 zoning in the Phase 2 lands in Squamish Business Park and also a new zoning for a small commercial centre, particularly the land uses which would be allowed as well as conditions of use, it will be helpful to note that there will be other actions which could be needed and would require further investigation:

- (a) The boundaries of the DPA 6a need to be clarified, although this is not necessary at this time and could be undertaken during the OCP review scheduled for 2016.
- (b) The land use designation in the OCP for the Squamish Business Park, "Employment & Industrial", need not be differentiated into two separate categories, at least not at this time.
- (c) The policies for Commercial Lands (Section 19) and Employment and Industrial Lands (Section 20) could need amendment to accommodate a greater range of commercial uses in the proposed commercial service centre than is presently anticipated in the plans for the Industrial Business area or Phase 2 lands north of Commercial Way.
- (d) Pending any evidence to the contrary, the development guidelines for DPA 6a remain appropriate, noting the buffer and special attention required at the interface between the business park and residential land uses at Austin Road. If experience to date suggests enhancements, this would need to be investigated.

### 2.1 Business Park Zoning for Phase 2 lands north of Commercial Way

Turning attention to the various planning and zoning amendments which might be required replace the interim I-1 Light Industrial zoning with new zoning for accommodating business uses in the Phase 2 lands, a review of the wide range of commercial and industrial zoning district schedules in the District of Squamish Zoning Bylaw confirms that none will appropriately govern land use and development as these have been envisioned for the north half of the Squamish Business Park, or DPA 6a.

SECTION 22   LOCAL COMMERCIAL (C-1) .....	83
SECTION 23   GASOLINE SERVICE STATION COMMERCIAL (C-2) .....	85
SECTION 24   TOURIST COMMERCIAL (C-3) .....	87
SECTION 25   DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL (C-4).....	89
SECTION 26   RECREATION COMMERCIAL (C-5) .....	91
SECTION 27   LIQUOR PRIMARY ESTABLISHMENT COMMERCIAL (C-6) .....	93
SECTION 28   HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL (C-7) .....	95
SECTION 29   CREMATORIUM COMMERCIAL (C-8) .....	97
SECTION 30   SPECIALIZED HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL (C-9) .....	99
SECTION 32   LIGHT INDUSTRIAL (I-1) .....	105
SECTION 33   RAIL MARSHALLING YARD (I-2) .....	109
SECTION 34   GENERAL INDUSTRIAL (I-3) .....	111
SECTION 35   USED GOODS INDUSTRIAL (I-4) .....	113
SECTION 36   LOG SORT (I-5) .....	115
SECTION 37   RAIL TRANSPORTATION (I-6) .....	117
SECTION 38   ROCK PROCESSING (I-7) .....	119

The I-1 Light Industrial Schedule will be a good starting point for a new business park zoning. First, we will consider which uses should be discouraged in a more intensively-developed, higher-quality area for the reason and these are the land uses which definitively require exterior storage and involve outdoor activity (these uses shown in strike-out below):

#### SECTION 32 | LIGHT INDUSTRIAL (I-1)

The intent of this zone is to provide for light industrial uses.

##### 32.1 PERMITTED USES

The following principal uses and no others are permitted:

- (a) automobile oriented commercial;
- (b) building supply outlets;
- (c) business and Professional Office, Minor Use-subject to Section 4.21;
- (d) drive-through restaurant, subject to Section 32.12;
- (e) fitness centre;
- (f) grooming of domestic dogs and cats;
- (g) ~~heavy equipment sales;~~
- (h) ~~industrial fuel installation;~~
- (i) light industrial;
- (j) motor vehicle repair shops;
- (k) ~~nurseries;~~
- (l) restaurant subject to Section 32.12; and
- (m) trade contractor facilities, including logging contractors.

Second, even while some of the uses are proposed to be retained, such as automobile-oriented commercial, motor vehicle repair shops, and trade contractor facilities, they will be inappropriate in a new business park if they have outdoor activity and storage. It will be important that all uses, especially (a), (b), (i), (j) and (m), be required to be wholly undertaken within completed enclosed premises to achieve the high-quality environment envisioned in the Plan. Three uses are proposed to be removed due to the outdoor activity and storage requirements which are essential to their operations: heavy equipment sales, industrial fuel installation and nurseries.

Third, the definition of “Light Industrial” which is in the Zoning By-law will no longer be appropriate. As it reads at present, it is well-suited for the southern part of Squamish Business Park: “LIGHT INDUSTRIAL means a use providing for the processing, fabricating, assembling, leasing, warehousing, transporting, distributing, wholesaling, testing, servicing, or repairing of goods or materials, where the primary activity of such a use is carried out within or exterior to a building, which may be serviced with a railway spur. Includes Medical Marihuana Production Multiple Users.” (underlining ours) In DPA 6a for the longer term there is the intent to prohibit any activity or storage exterior to a building (except for parking and loading).

Rather than amend this definition and seek to make it serve two different kinds of industrial districts, one with exterior activity and storage and one without, and rather than establish a new category “Industrial Business” with a slightly revised definition, the easiest and common sense solution is to make “Light Industrial” subject to a condition of use in the new zoning district schedule requiring all activity and storage to be wholly undertaken in completely enclosed premises.

In addition to I-1 land uses which would be retained there are other land uses which could be accommodated in a business park and which would need to be added to the list above. After reviewing all the land uses stated in the Squamish Zoning By-law (and entered into spreadsheet for ease of analysis), two land uses were identified which would appear appropriate to add to the list of land uses in a new I-8 Specialized Business Park Industrial zoning district:

- business and Professional Office, Minor Use (not limited to a specific lot, as is presently the case); and
- indoor recreational use.

A couple of things can be noted here. First, it was contemplated that “Professional Office, Minor Use” should be replaced by “Professional Office, Major Use”. However, a close read of their definitions indicates that “Major” is far too encompassing:

**BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL OFFICE, MAJOR** means the use of a building for the purpose of carrying out business or professional activities.

**BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL OFFICE, MINOR** means the use of a building for the purpose of conducting a business in an office environment, where such a business does not rely upon a continuous flow of customers visiting the premises and does not engage in any retail sales, and may include but not be limited to such businesses as architectural, data processing, drafting, engineering, legal, surveying or, real estate appraisal offices, and specifically excludes medical and dental offices, travel agencies, insurance offices and real estate offices.

It is proposed that “Business and Professional Office, Minor Use” be retained, but that it be allowed on any site, and not just a single lot in the Phase 1 lands as is presently the case. It should also be noted that there appears to be an error in the by-law at present. The condition of use for this land use states “subject to Section 4.21” when it should state Section 32.13. In Section 4 General Regulations of the Zoning By-law, 4.21 pertains to accessory residential use, while 32.13 limits this use to a specific lot and to 60% of the gross floor area of the building on that lot.

Second, the use term “indoor recreational use” is defined in the Zoning By-law as “the use of a building for indoor recreational activities that require warehouse type space, and may include climbing walls and adventure centers, but specifically excludes arcades.” This use would include activities related to cycling, skateboards, ice-skating and related recreational activities. There is a condition of use in the I-1 schedule requiring a minimum floor area of 5,000 sq. ft. This condition seems unnecessarily restrictive when we consider that a fitness centre is a permitted use and could easily be much smaller in size. For comparison purposes, a typical gymnasium is about 4,200 sf in size (50 ft x 84 ft), not including viewing area, washrooms and lockers.

The resulting draft intent statement and list of permitted uses, for the longer-term future, would look as follows (new land uses are in **bold**):

Draft - SPECIALISED BUSINESS PARK INDUSTRIAL (I-8)

*The intent of this zone is to permit development of an industrial business park with a high standard of design consisting of light impact industrial uses, high technology industry, industry*

*with a significant amount of research and development activity, warehouse, limited offices and service uses all these carried out in enclosed buildings forming part of a comprehensive design.*

#### PERMITTED USES

The following principal uses and no others are permitted:

- (a) automobile oriented commercial,;
- (b) building supply outlets;
- (c) **business and Professional Office, Minor Use;**
- (d) drive-through restaurant, subject to Section 32.12;
- (e) fitness centre;
- (f) grooming of domestic dogs and cats;
- (g) **indoor recreational use;**
- (h) light industrial;
- (i) motor vehicle repair shops;
- (j) restaurant subject to Section 32.12, i.e. shall be limited to a maximum of 50 seats; and
- (k) trade contractor facilities, including logging contractors.

It can be noted that of the 15 city and municipal zoning by-laws in the Metro Vancouver area which were reviewed by this consultant, those of Vancouver, Richmond, Surrey, Coquitlam and Langley Township appeared to be the most advanced and sophisticated in terms of the broad variety of commercial, industrial, commercial-industrial, business park and related zoning schedules. Nevertheless, there was a wide range of vocabularies for distinguishing land uses. Probably due to local circumstances and preferences, there was little commonality and not any obvious 'best practice' regarding the list of land uses permitted in a business park zoning district.

This need not be disappointing as it means there is a lot of scope for local variations in these matters. It means that the District is free to craft and tailor the land use mix for its business park to those activities which are both feasible and desirable from a community perspective, such as the recreation activity and recreation technology industry so important to the area and regional district.

## 2.2 Commercial Zoning for a Small Business-serving Commercial Centre

To accommodate a commercial service centre in the business park, as proposed by Solterra on 5 acres in its 20-acre Sea-to-Sky Business Park, a new industrial-commercial zoning for the long term should be considered to ensure it contains the appropriate land uses and conditions of use.

To develop a "business park commercial" zoning for the commercial centre, we are guided by the advice of industrial and business park development professionals and also the OCPs and zoning bylaws of Metro Vancouver municipalities (see companion report Commercial Services in Industrial and Business Parks). The evidence is that industrial areas and business parks which do not have proximity or good access to commercial services and amenities to serve the needs of industrial businesses and their employees should provide a small commercial service centre to ensure that these needs are met with a minimum of travel. It was also found that these commercial centres had a commercial zoning different than the surrounding industrial zoning, i.e. all of them being "islands of red in seas of blue" (red and blue being the colours of commercial and industrial zoning districts, respectively, on virtually all zoning maps.

Following this it is helpful here to recall the ULI advice which described amenities and services as one of ten important site selection criteria in the development of business parks and in the site selection process of industrial and related businesses (see earlier discussion pages 29-30). In most well-developed jurisdictions, on-site amenities and services are increasingly expected by businesses and employees and they contribute to a more interesting and desirable working environment.

ULI advisors see a broad range of commercial activities included among the amenities and services for employees and businesses in a business park depending on the kind of industrial park, its size and the availability or not of amenities and services in close proximity to the park. These activities include restaurants, fast-food outlets, convenience stores, banks, travel agencies, dry cleaners, barber shops and beauty salons, daycare facilities, health clubs, recreational facilities, copy centers, mailing and delivery services, office supply stores, automobile service stations, auto repair shops and hotel or motel with meeting facilities.

Interestingly, Squamish Business Park does have the Sandman Hotel in very close proximity between Discovery Way and Highway 99, and also the Best Western to the south on Progress Way. For other services and amenities however, it is at least a mile from the entrance to Squamish Business Park on Commercial Way and Highway 99 south to the Downtown or Antigonish Mall to the north.

In considering the land uses to allow in the proposed commercial centre it is proposed as a starting point to allow the land uses which are recommended above in a new I-8 specialised business park industrial zoning (and amended I-1 zoning). The next step is to consider the District's Local Commercial C-1 zoning to identify the basic commercial uses to accommodate in a business-serving commercial centre. However, there are uses in this population-serving C-1 zone which would be inappropriate and are proposed to not be permitted in a business-serving commercial centre (in strike-out below):

#### 83 SECTION 22 | LOCAL COMMERCIAL (C-1)

The intent of this zone is to provide for convenience shopping serving an immediately surrounding neighbourhood(s).

##### 22.1 PERMITTED USES

The following principal uses and no others are permitted:

- (a) ~~apartment dwelling, subject to Section 4.16;~~
- ~~(b) arts and culture;~~
- (c) business and Professional Office, ~~Major use~~ (replace by Minor Use);
- (d) ~~entertainment, subject to Section 4.22;~~
- ~~(e) child care facility;~~
- (f) ~~hostel, limited to 10 beds;~~
- (g) ~~personal service establishment;~~
- (h) post office;
- (i) restaurant; and
- (j) retail store.

The land uses in the C-1 schedule which would not be appropriate to consider in a business park setting include apartment dwelling, child care facility, entertainment uses, hostel and personal service establishment. On the other hand, there do not appear to be many other commercial uses which could be added to the list which remains above. The Zoning By-law has "Commercial" as an all-encompassing

use term, but this would seem too broad to include here, as it would include everything from pharmacies to drycleaners, most of which are population-serving.

Nevertheless, “financial institution”, which would include ATM’s, seems an appropriate use to include, and also to include “drive-through” financial institution. However, given the small size of the proposed commercial centre, limited to about 75,000 sf, and given the population-serving characteristic of this land use, it also seems reasonable to limit it to one establishment and/or a maximum floor area

It is proposed that “Professional Office, Major Use” be replaced by “Professional Office, Minor Use” for the reason, discussed earlier, that “Major Use” is far too encompassing, as it includes a wide range of population-serving uses.

A new use term “business service establishment” should be considered to replace “personal service establishment” (g). This land use could include businesses such as locksmith, printing/copying services, computer repairs and services, office equipment and supplies, alarm and security services, mailing and shipping services other than Canada Post, and so on.

The land uses which seem appropriate to include in a business park commercial centre, and which would need to be added to the list of uses proposed in a new I-9 specialised business park industrial-commercial zoning, are these:

- business service establishment;
- financial institution, including drive-through financial institution, limited to one establishment;
- post office;
- restaurant (not limited to 50 seats); and
- retail store.

The following is the draft intent statement and list of permitted uses, recommended for development in a small service commercial business centre district (new land uses relative to the proposed new I-8 zoning are shown in **bold**):

Draft - SPECIALIZED BUSINESS PARK INDUSTRIAL-COMMERCIAL (I-9)

*The intent of this zone is to provide for convenience services primarily serving the businesses and employees in the surrounding business park, with a high standard of design and amenity, consisting of limited office, retail and service uses all these carried out in enclosed buildings forming part of a comprehensive design. It is also the intent of this zone is to permit light impact industrial uses, high technology industry, and industry with a significant amount of research and development activity.*

PERMITTED USES

The following principal uses and no others are permitted:

- (a) automobile oriented commercial;
- (b) business and Professional Office, Minor Use;
- (c) **business service establishment**;
- (d) drive-through restaurant;

- (e) **financial institution**, including drive-through financial institution, and these to be limited to one business establishment;
- (f) fitness centre;
- (g) grooming of domestic dogs and cats;
- (h) indoor recreational use;
- (i) light industrial;
- (j) motor vehicle repair shops;
- (k) **post office**;
- (l) **restaurant**;
- (m) **retail store**; and
- (n) trade contractor facilities.

It could be that some uses, such as ‘restaurant’ and ‘retail store’ be limited by number, size or definition, to business- and employee-serving activities, and not include activities more appropriately located in the downtown and other population-serving commercial areas. This is to prevent the commercial sprawl which would dilute and work against efforts to achieve an active and vibrant downtown.

The multi-building development which Solterra proposes in its small commercial service centre cannot be accommodated in the I-1 district due to a restriction on the number of buildings per lot:

#### 32.5 BUILDINGS PER LOT

Except as otherwise permitted through Section 4.2, no more than two (2) principal buildings shall be located on the lot.

This restriction should be removed for all development in the Industrial Business area north of Commercial Way as multi-building development is increasingly the norm in higher-density multi-tenant industrial and business park developments, particularly those that remain in single ownership.

### 2.3 Amendments to Official Community Plan

The Official Community Plan has a Land Use Designation Map (Schedule B) which identifies the appropriate land uses throughout the District of Squamish. For each of the 12 land use designations and related topics there are guiding principles, objectives and policies in Part 4 of the OCP. If amendments to the zoning for Squamish Business Park are proposed, and these amendments involve land uses, then the question needs to be asked about whether or not the proposed land use amendments are consistent with or not in conflict with the provisions of the OCP. It could be that zoning amendments are supportable and not inconsistent with the OCP but OCP amendments might be needed to have clarity about consistency.

Two sections of the Policies (Part 4) of the OCP, Commercial Lands (Section 19) and Employment and Industrial Lands (Section 20), address commercial and industrial land uses accommodated in the District of Squamish, and also Schedule K of the OCP (Business Park Sub-Area Plan) address lands uses and development in the Squamish Business Park. Some amendments are needed to all three for accommodating a new specialized business park industrial zoning for the Phase 2 lands north of Commercial Way, as anticipated in the Business Park Sub-area Plan, and for accommodating a new

specialized business park industrial-commercial zoning for a small commercial service centre as proposed by Solterra Development Corp.

First, the proposed new specialized business park industrial zoning is consistent with the Employment and Industrial Lands (Section 20) policies, particularly the following:

**20 - 1** The areas designated as *Employment and Industrial* on Schedule B are to be used for light, service or heavy industrial uses, business park uses, trade schools and institutional uses involving industrial applications based on zoning and Sub-Area Plan requirements.

**20 - 3** Development in the Squamish Business Park shall occur in accordance with the Business Park Sub-Area Plan as described in Schedule L (should be Schedule K).

**20 - 13** The Business Park and former BC Rail Park will be considered the preferred expansion location of future industrial uses.

To ensure that the new zoning is consistent with the OCP, it is recommended that a new sub-section, Business Industrial Lands, be added in Section 20 following “Diverse Industries” (page 85), as follows:

**BUSINESS INDUSTRIAL LANDS**

**20 - 31** *The Squamish Business Park Sub Area Plan is intended to facilitate the development of a progressive and prosperous business environment that will be the catalyst for the continuation and creation of a wide variety of thriving businesses which contribute to the employment diversity and increase employment intensity.*

**20 - 32** *The Business Park is not intended to accommodate small scale retail stores and personal services establishments, as these operations are better suited for the Downtown area and the District’s other commercial areas.*

**20 - 33** *Buildings in the Park will be designed, landscaping will be provided, and signage will be installed in a manner that balances the needs of the businesses with the aesthetic values of the built and natural environment.*

**20 - 34** *The Business Park will accommodate a mix of commercial and industrial businesses, including manufacturing, wholesaling, and high tech offices, located in a compatible manner, with businesses of a similar character grouped together so that those operations that light industrial operations and those of a high tech nature will not be located in the same area where as heavy industrial operations and that require external production and storage.*

**20 - 35** *For that portion of the Business Park north of Commercial Way, a higher-quality form of building and site development will accommodate a broad mix and higher intensity of industrial and commercial businesses including knowledge-based, advanced technology and recreation technology (“rec-tech”), with all activities and storage undertaken wholly within completely enclosed buildings.*

The establishment of proposed new specialized business park industrial zoning does not appear to need any amendments to the OCP regarding Commercial Lands (Section 19) policies where it is already anticipated that there will be some commercial uses on Employment and Industrial Lands:

**19 - 1** Lands designated as *Downtown, Highway and Tourist Commercial, Mixed Use Commercial, or Employment and Industrial* on Schedule B allow commercial uses.



Employment and Industrial Lands policies have also anticipated that there will be some expansion of retail and professional office uses on lands identified in the Business Park Sub-Area Plan:

**20 - 7** Expansion of retail and professional office uses outside of those lands identified in the Business Park Sub-Area Plan are more appropriately located in the downtown, and are not permitted in areas designated for industrial use in order to preserve the industrial land base and promote downtown development.

Amendments to the Business Park Sub-Area Plan do not appear to be necessary regarding the new specialized business park industrial zoning which is proposed in this report.

Second, OCP amendments are needed for the new specialized business park industrial-commercial zoning which is proposed for accommodating a small commercial service centre in the Squamish Business Park that serves the needs of industrial and commercial businesses and their employees.

To ensure that the proposed commercial centre is consistent with the OCP, it is recommended here that a new sub-section, Business Park Service Centre, be added in Section 19 following “Marine Uses” (page 81), as follows: (Note: “Temporary Use Permits” policy 19 – 20 would be renumbered accordingly.)

*BUSINESS PARK SERVICE CENTRE*

**19 - 20** *To attract and maintain a variety of industrial and commercial business park businesses and employees, the Squamish Business Park should provide centrally-located service commercial uses to serve the needs of businesses in the Park and their employees.*

**19 – 21** *Retail, office, restaurant, business service establishments, financial institution and related uses would be limited in number and/or scale to discourage and minimize the population-serving businesses which are more appropriately located in the downtown, highway and tourist commercial or neighbourhood commercial locations.*

**19 – 22** *The commercial service centre should be compact and well-designed, centrally-located with easy pedestrian, transit and bicycle access from all businesses in the Park.*

Just as the OCP did not anticipate a commercial service centre to address the day-to-day needs of industrial and commercial businesses and their employees, as we see in most industrial areas and business parks in Metro Vancouver, so too the Business Park Sub-Area Plan requires some adjustments to accommodate the Solterra proposal.

In the Plan’s “Planning Context” (page 2) the following additional comment, *in italics*, is recommended:

**2.1.2 Zoning Bylaw**

There are a number of different zones that apply in the Business Park, the predominant one being the Light Industrial (I-1) zone. The intent of this zone is to accommodate light industrial uses, but the zone also permits limited commercial uses such as car dealerships, building supply outlets, and nurseries. The undeveloped land within the Business Park is zoned I-1. *When these Phase 2 lands are given a new specialized business park industrial zoning, it should also be anticipated that a small commercial service centre will be required to serve the needs of business park employees and businesses.*

In the Plan's "Vision Statement" (page 6) the following additional comment, *in italics*, is recommended:

In order to take advantage of its highly visible location, the frontage of the Business Park along Highway 99 will have a commercial image. Generally commercial operations will be limited to large format retail outlets and auto oriented service commercial activities. The Park is not intended to accommodate small scale retail stores and personal services establishments, as these operations are better suited for the Downtown area and the District's other commercial areas, as so indicated in the OCP. *A limited number of small-scale business service establishments, retail stores, restaurants and other commercial uses to serve the needs of business park employees and businesses will be accommodated in a central location with good pedestrian, bicycle and transit access to the whole of the business park.*

In the Plan's Commercial Land Use Policies (page 9), an additional policy is recommended to avoid any possible conflict with listed policies:

*g) Notwithstanding Policies 4.2.1 (d) and (e), accommodate a limited number of small business service establishments, retail stores, restaurants and other commercial uses, provided they are in one small centrally-located place with good pedestrian, bicycle and transit access to the whole of the business park.*

In the Plan's Industrial Land Use Policies (pages 9-10), a repeat of the foregoing is recommended as an additional policy to avoid any possible conflict with the listed policies:

*f) Notwithstanding Policies 4.2.2 (b) and (c), accommodate a limited number of small business service establishments, retail stores, restaurants and other commercial uses, provided they are in one small centrally-located place with good pedestrian, bicycle and transit access to the whole of the business park.*

To summarize, a small number of amendments to the OCP Commercial and Employment & Industrial Lands policies are recommended to confirm the new specialized business park industrial zoning will be consistent with the OCP. Similarly OCP amendments are recommended to provide for the specialized business park industrial-commercial zoning, with several additional amendments needed in the Business Park Sub-Area Plan (Schedule K of the OCP).

### 3. Interim Zoning Amendments

There is a sense of urgency regarding the property sales, development and lease activity in the Squamish Business Park, and this is reflected in the District's tax relief program adopted last year. In this context there might be some keenness to expedite the implementation of new zoning for the Business Park. On the other hand, an Employment Lands Study is underway for developing a strategy regarding employment and employment lands in the District, and a review of the OCP is anticipated for 2016. In this broader context, a two-step process or phased approach might be undertaken for implementing new business park zoning so as to begin making progress on some things while maintaining flexibility and not closing future opportunities.

The new business park industrial zoning and related commercial centre zoning as described above might be delayed and instead the minimum zoning amendments immediately adopted as a transitional and temporary measure. This would provide the greatest flexibility possible in the short term while remaining optimistic about the long-term evolution of the business park.

The proposed interim strategy can be summarized as follows:

- retain the I-1 zoning and all of its permitted uses for all the Squamish Business Park, both north and south of Commercial Way (Phase 1 and Phase 2 lands respectively);
- amend the I-1 zoning by adding the following land uses to the list of permitted uses, but limiting them to the DPA 6a area north of Commercial Way, with a proviso along the lines of “shall only be permitted on the properties described as ...”:
  - business and Professional Office, Minor Use; and
  - indoor recreational use;
- add a condition of use for the area north of Commercial Way requiring all production activity to be wholly undertaken within completely enclosed premises, but allow exterior storage so long as it is completely screened as provided for in section 4.7 of the Zoning By-law; and
- amend regulation 32.5 (Buildings Per Lot) to allow multi-building development in the area north of Commercial Way.

Regarding the small commercial centre proposed by Solterra on 5 acres in their Sea-to-Sky Business Park, the following is proposed:

- add the following land uses to the list of permitted uses, but limiting them to the 5-acre commercial centre site with a proviso along the lines of “shall only be permitted on the properties described as ...”:
  - business service establishment,
  - financial institution, including drive-through financial institution, and limited to one business establishment,
  - post office,
  - restaurant (not subject to the restriction to 50 seats), and
  - retail store.

The following is the draft intent statement and list of permitted uses, recommended for development in an interim, amended light industrial I-1 zoning (new land uses and provisions in **bold**):

Amended LIGHT INDUSTRIAL (I-1)

The intent of this zone is to provide for light industrial uses, **and to accommodate business park and business-serving commercial uses in the north half of the Squamish Business Park.**

PERMITTED USES

The following principal uses and no others are permitted:

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- (a) automobile oriented commercial;
- (b) business and Professional Office, Minor Uses, **subject to being permitted only in DPA 6a;**
- (c) business service establishment, subject to being permitted only on the lot described as...;**
- (d) drive-through restaurant, subject to Sections 32.12;
- (e) financial institution, including drive-through financial institution, and limited to one business establishment, subject to being permitted only on the lot described as...;**
- (f) fitness centre;
- (g) grooming of domestic dogs and cats;
- (h) heavy equipment sales;
- (i) indoor recreational use, subject to being permitted only in DPA 6a;**
- (j) industrial fuel installation;
- (k) light industrial;
- (l) motor vehicle repair shops;
- (m) nurseries;
- (n) post office, subject to being permitted only on the lot described as...;**
- (o) restaurant, subject to Section 32.12 (limited to a maximum of 50 seats) **and permitted with no maximum seating only on the lot described as ...;**
- (p) retail store, subject to being permitted only on the lot described as...; and**
- (q) trade contractor facilities, including logging contractors.

The zoning amendments proposed here as an interim measure have the advantage of being potentially more easily and quickly implemented as no new zoning schedules would need to be established in the zoning by-law. Also no amendments would be needed to the zoning map as no properties would be rezoned from one zoning to another.

The proposed amendments to the I-1 zoning do not yet fully implement what is anticipated in terms of new business park zoning by the Business Park Sub-Area Plan for DPA 6a or the Phase 2 lands north of Commercial Way. Nevertheless, they go enough of the way there that the Official Community Plan and Business Park Plan will need to be amended as described earlier:

- several amendments to the OCP Commercial and Employment & Industrial Lands policies to confirm the new specialized business park industrial zoning will be consistent with the OCP,
- OCP amendments to provide for the specialized business park industrial-commercial zoning to accommodate the proposed small commercial service centre, and
- several additional amendments are needed in the Business Park Sub-Area Plan (Schedule K of the OCP).

Official Community Plan amendments are infrequent and never undertaken lightly. For this reason it is recommended that the District Council give endorsement to the proposed specialized industrial business park zoning and specialized industrial-commercial zoning for replacing I-1 zoning in the phase 2 lands north of Commercial Way. To approve the proposed new zoning schedules “in principle” would approve a general future direction for them which will be implemented in the context of and depending upon the outcome of the Employment Lands Study and the review of the Official Community Plan proposed for 2016. On this basis interim zoning could be established through various significant zoning and OCP amendments in the comfort that they are consistent with a long-term implementation strategy.

## Concluding Remarks

The purpose of this report was to review the Squamish OCP, Business Park Sub-Area Plan and Squamish Zoning Bylaw to determine how the Solterra proposal might be accommodated and also what new zoning might replace the interim I-1 Light Industrial zoning in the surrounding area. The review has identified various amendments in the OCP and Zoning Bylaw which will be appropriate to accommodate business uses in the Phase 2 lands (a new Specialised Business Park Industrial I-8 zoning) including a small centre of commercial services and amenities in Solterra's Sea-to-Sky Business Centre (a new Specialized Business Park Industrial-Commercial I-9 zoning) to serve the needs of the surrounding, larger Squamish Business Park.

In light of the slow property sales and development in the Squamish Business Park, and the sense of urgency for achieving new development, a two-step process is proposed for implementing new business park zoning. Immediate and temporary zoning measures, which have the same objectives as the District's Revitalization Tax Exemption Program, could help to facilitate and expedite development. Some amendments are therefore proposed to the Light Industrial I-1 zoning, to add additional land uses limited to the Phase 2 lands and others limited to the proposed commercial centre.

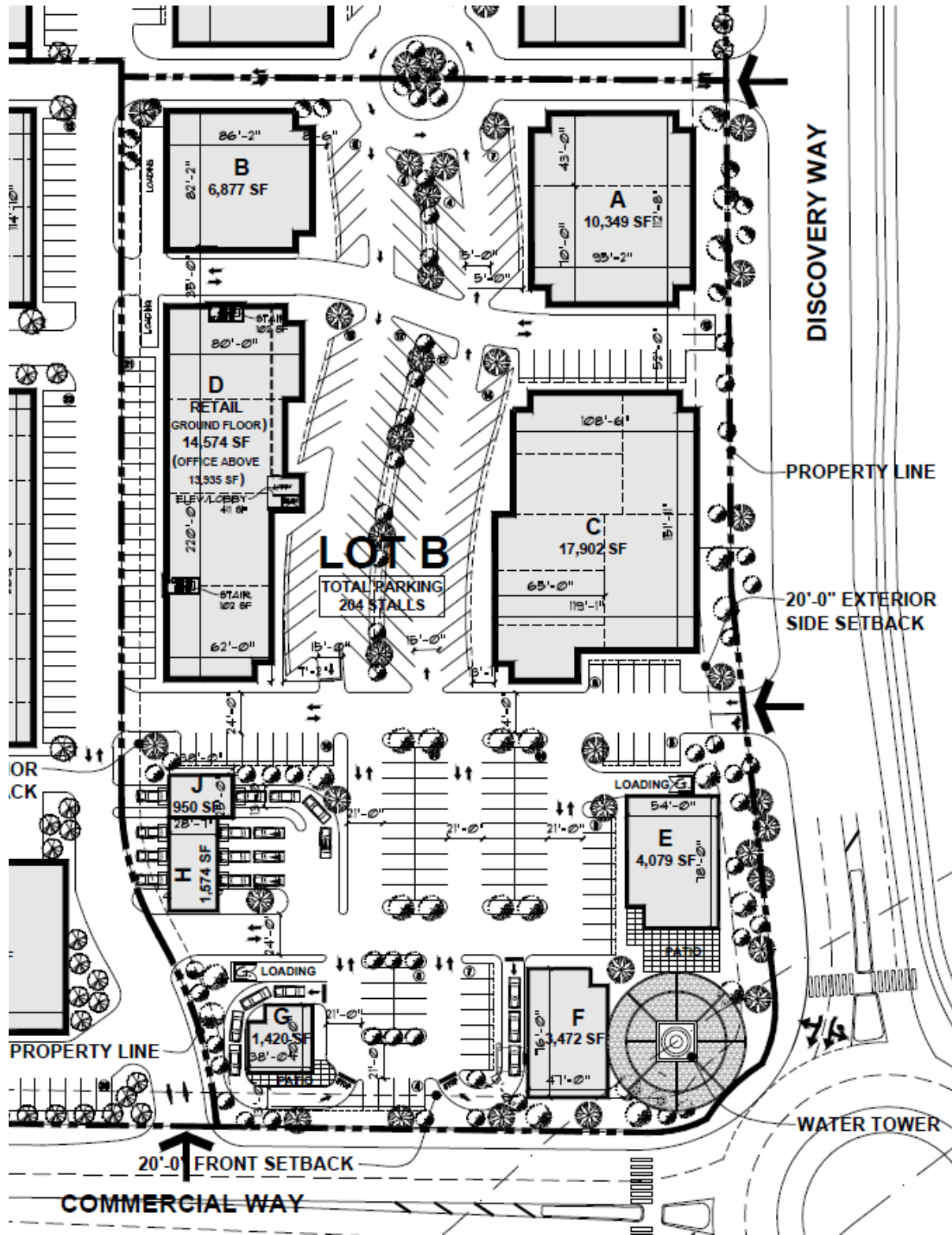
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July 11, 2014

Appendix A – Illustrative and Flexible Site Plan



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